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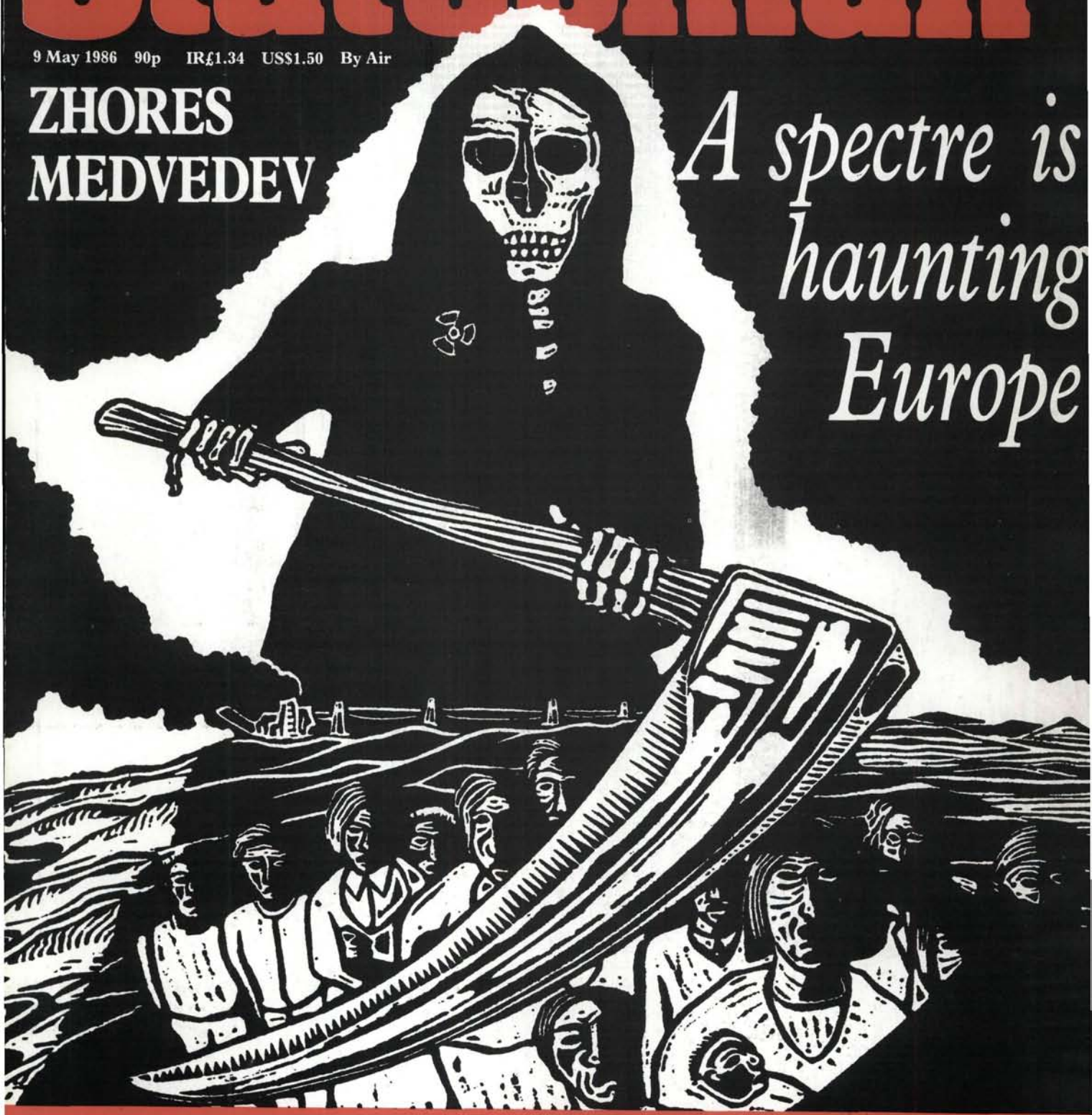

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ANDY McSMITH on the power structures behind the secrecy and the lies 18-20

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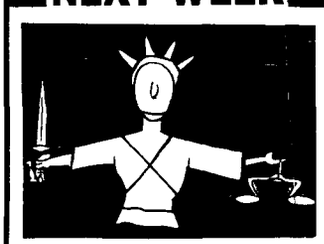

CROSSING THE BAR

The most powerful profession (barristers, of course) is having to change whether it likes it or not. OLE HANSEN looks at what's wrong with legal practice and how it should be reformed

BYPASSING THE UNIONS

Who needs union reps when management can speak direct to the workers? MARK HOLLINGSWORTH details new tactics at the NCB

SACRED AND PROFANE

ANDREW LUMSDEN argues for a less reverential attitude towards theatre-going

UNCLE SAM

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE reviews the complete collection of Beckett's plays

New Statesman

Vol 111 No 2876 9 May 1986

North — North dialogue in Tokyo this week

ONE MASSIVE drawback to economic summits like the one this week in Tokyo is that they pander to Mrs Thatcher's delusion that she is a great and influential world leader. By all accounts she surpassed even herself this time — abrasive, hogging the flashlights, butting in to answer journalists' questions that were actually addressed to President Hopalong.

No doubt it is all a welcome and glamorous escape for her from the realities of running the government of a second-rank industrial power, where unemployment is still rising and where the political party you have been leading for eleven years is in spasmodic revolt and heading for disaster in local authority elections. But there is something unreal and insulting to the rest of the world in describing an institution as a 'world economic summit' when the United Kingdom (and now Canada, population 25 million) is at the top table, but countries like Brazil (130 million) and India (over 700 million) are not present even to put their views while communiqués are drafted on how to set the world economic situation to rights.

The reality, of course, if that these are not world economic summits at all. They are occasions when the US calls together its trusties from the Western industrial community and tries to see how far it can use them to help further unilateral American policies in the areas of international economics and finance.

The prototype for these meetings, of course, was the wartime session at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, where the Americans took Lord Keynes's ideas for a new genuinely supranational world banking system and turned them into the International Monetary Fund's system of fixed exchange rates — all tied to the US dollar. This made the dollar the *only* national currency in the world not subject to the domestic disciplines that the IMF and the United States enjoined (and still enjoin) on other economies. To its credit, Bretton Woods was an international exchange rate system that financed a quarter of a century of unprecedented economic growth in the industrial world. But it was also the dollar mechanism by which American business established the neo-imperialist hold that it has on world business and industry today.

Bretton Woods was a cosy Anglo-American affair. In more recent economic 'summitry', the Americans started by trying to confine it all to a Group of Four — the US, plus the UK, France and West Germany. But the Italians didn't like being left out and nor did the Canadians; and Japan was itself a large part of the world trade problem; and the EEC Commission argued that it ought to be along as an observer at least; and so the circus has grown.

In her frankly embarrassing eagerness in Tokyo to 'out Ronnie' Ronnie on the issue of terrorists, F-111 bombing raids and President Gadafy, Mrs Thatcher appears not to have noticed that on the international economic front there has been a complete change in the American line. Reagan speech writers may still call on phrases like free enterprise, open trading policies and market forces. But the Reagan Treasury Secretary, James Baker, has taken American economic policy through a 180 degree turn since 1984.

If Mrs Thatcher and her economic factotum, Nigel Lawson, have not yet realised it, Mr Baker has come firmly to the conclusion that it's free market forces themselves that have brought the world to the point where its financial system is on the point of total breakdown — and that it is time for a little co-ordinated government intervention.

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So, since last year, the dollar has been massively devalued (especially against the Japanese yen) and a new policy of active intervention by governments in the Third World debt crisis was announced to the annual World Bank meeting in Seoul.

What non-Americans must realise, though, is that the basis of the Baker U-turn is his greater understanding than Reagan of true American self-interest. It is American banks and American business that will suffer catastrophe, if the current trends of the world economy are not diverted. We owe it to ourselves to see that European interests are also protected. We owe it to the Third World to see that the Baker proposals that the Group of Seven should now monitor and co-ordinate their economic policies is not a proposal that once again simply works for the North against the South. □

Some people didn't do their homework

IF THERE'S one thing worse than a policy fudge, it's political ignorance. To the Labour Party's shame, its leaders have treated us to an egregious display of both ever since Chernobyl started spewing its cancer-laden clouds of radioactivity round the world two weeks ago.

The most distressing performance was that of the Labour leader, Neil Kinnock. Interviewed on TV-AM last weekend, he made it crystal clear that he did not understand the nuclear power issue. He suggested that the THORP reprocessing plant at Sellafield was necessary for safe fuel handling (it is not) and he implied that the new European plutonium fuel reprocessing plant planned for Dounreay in Scotland was already under way (it will not be started, if ever, for at least a couple of years).

His environment and energy spokespeople, Jack Cunningham and Stan Orme, have put up equally shambolic performances. Within an hour of each other on Sunday, they managed to come out with diametrically opposing versions of Labour's policy. Cunningham said that Britain needed to retain the nuclear option; Orme said it should be phased out. Neither were particularly coherent or convincing.

As a result, no one is pleased. Labour's anti-nuclear activists are angry and disheartened, the nuclear industry's 150,000 workers are confused and uncertain, and the general public is left with the impression of a party completely at sea. A couple of months ago the *New Statesman* warned that Labour risked fatal damage unless it applied its collective mind to nuclear power. Chernobyl has opened the sore sooner than expected.

THE IRONY is that behind all the inept posturing there is probably a broad measure of agreement in the Shadow Cabinet and the party as a whole as to what should be done. If Labour comes to power, the Sizewell pressurised water reactor will not be built, the Dounreay reprocessing plant will be cancelled (in spite of Kinnock's suggestion to the contrary) and no other nuclear power stations will be started. There will be fierce arguments over whether or not to continue with THORP (it should be reviewed and then abandoned) and whether the new advanced gas-cooled reactors at Torness and Heysham should be mothballed (how about converting them to coal?). But even so it should be possible to present the party as overwhelmingly opposed to nuclear power — a policy that would surely not suffer from unpopularity.

The remaining problem is the baser instincts of the three key figures: Orme's love of the low profile, Cunningham's love of the atom, and Kinnock's love of Cunningham. Orme must stop allowing Cunningham to make all the running, Cunningham must stop shooting his mouth off and Kinnock should listen to voices other than Cunningham's. He should also step back from the controversy and consider how, in due course, he might reduce the heat by a judicious Shadow Cabinet reshuffle. □

In the heat of the moment

LAST SATURDAY'S paper's reported the results of two trials where the defendants were accused of murder. Colin Kemp was cleared of the murder of his wife, the jury accepted that he had accidentally strangled her during a 'night terror'.

The other, less publicised, case was of Yvonne Hey who was cleared of murder but found guilty of manslaughter and jailed for five years after shooting the man who raped her. Passing sentence, Mr Justice Alliott told Hey: 'I accept that you were provoked. It was indeed rape'.

This is not the place to discuss the merits of those two particular cases. However, coming as they did at the same time, they serve to highlight a trend and a point where a change in English law is needed.

Strangulation is one of the most common forms of homicide. It is done almost excusively by men killing women. It is also seen by the courts and the media as a unpremeditated act, a crime of passion (the man was provoked by an unfaithful or nagging wife) or as an accident, where the man didn't realise his own strength.

Unless you have been trained in the art, however, strangling someone *to death* is not such an easy matter, a few seconds' work. It generally takes several minutes and mostly involves continuing to strangle the victim after she has blacked out and her face has changed colour.

Women's Aid refuges up and down the country have women walking into them daily who blacked out and came round again after their husbands or lovers strangled them, took fright and stopped. That is, it *is* possible to change one's mind.

Women very, very rarely strangle men; it's a question of strength, perceived or otherwise. In Victorian times the classic female way was poison. Nowadays knives and guns are more common.

To the courts and the media, however, the difference is crucial. When a woman kills an abusive lover or husband or father (and physical or sexual abuse is most often the defence) it is seen as a premeditated crime, one done in cold blood and therefore all the more horrible. (Mr Norman Jones, QC, prosecuting, said Hey was 'colder than she would have you believe'.) Premeditated crimes are dealt with more severely, with longer sentences.

In several states in the US, women have successfully argued that what looks like premeditation is in fact self-defence — but in order to defend themselves against a stronger opponent, an abusive husband or incestuous father, girls and women have had to resort to the use of weapons rather than bare hands. After all, the bare hands of a man *are* a weapon — when used against a physically weaker victim. □

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CHERNOBYL — WHOSE BACKYARD THEN?

If clouds of radioactive material floating in over Britain as well as other parts of Europe from the Chernobyl disaster aren't enough to galvanise dramatic public demonstrations of feeling, then whatever will or could be? JANE DIBBLIN on the 'grassroots' response

THE FIRST opinion poll conducted after news came in of the Chernobyl melt-down, by Gallup for the BBC's *This Week Next Week*, showed that those opposed to having a nuclear power station in their geographical area has risen from 45 per cent in January to 65 per cent now.

That sounds like enough to bring about an unprecedented anti-nuclear-power 'activist' response, provoking headlines, but there also were further less clear-cut findings. The numbers in the immediate post-Chernobyl aftermath who think Britain should completely stop generating nuclear power have risen only from 28 per cent to 31 per cent — and that's despite a majority of 55 per cent remaining 'unconvinced' that a Chernobyl-scale disaster could happen in Britain.

So the 'not in my backyard but otherwise I'm untroubled' syndrome which Rob Edwards pinpointed in these pages (*NS* 7 March) remains unshaken, even if it's a considerable gain (so far as 'gain' can be spoken of in connection with Chernobyl) that in regions contemplated for power stations, waste dumping and the like the 'middle ground' of opinion has been shifted markedly towards apprehensiveness.

Only last month (*NS* 25 April) we were able to congratulate CND on its fast and highly commented-on response to the Tripoli bombings crisis. The Chernobyl situation and its implications for Britain's civil nuclear power programme, and those of other European states, seems to have found no organisation capable of comparable initiatives before government and Atomic Energy Authority spokespersons regain the high ground over public opinion.

No prime organisation

One of the lacks shown up by this past week's disclosures from the Soviet disaster is the absence of any one British organisation focusing *primarily* on opposition to nuclear power generation. In 1979 the Anti-Nuclear Campaign (ANC — an unhelpful acronym given the importance of South Africa elsewhere on the Left agenda) launched itself on the wave of demonstrations targeted particularly at Torness.

John Chapman

A first glimpse of the new coalition? FoE and CND together carted a coffin from the Department of Energy to the Soviet Embassy

It was short-lived. By the time CND began to flower for the second time, in late 1980, the ANC was already fragmenting and facing financial embarassments. Many supporters left for CND to highlight the links between nuclear weaponry and nuclear power generation, but the single focus was inevitably lost.

Former ANC supporters tend these days to speak disparagingly of it. But whatever its shortcomings, a void was left which — very visibly — has not been filled. Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and CND indeed see opposition to civil nuclear power as one, but *one*, of their several campaigns. Only SCRAM (Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace) prioritise the issue in more exclusive fashion.

The Big Three have their strengths: Friends of the Earth does research (its hard slog to prepare for the Sizewell enquiry, which drained it at the time, is now paying off as its findings become common currency); Greenpeace is strong on the daring direct actions and the gimmicky visuals. And CND of course has the clout of a mass organisation, with about 400,000 members nationally and locally.

But as FOE's Stuart Boyle says: 'The three don't marry easily'. In truth they've only started trying to in recent months. Meg Beresford, new CND general secretary, is hoping they'll all work together to build on the new levels of public awareness enforced by the last 10 days. A new national ANC, only too liable to fizzle out again, probably isn't what's needed — but rather a more sophisticated coalition of the existing organisations. ●

MARGARETTA D'ARCY TAKES ON IRISH ARTS ESTABLISHMENT

AS WE GO to press the Galway playwright Margaretta D'Arcy (married to playwright John Arden) waits hourly to see whether an injunction taken out by the landlords of the Irish Arts Council's premises in Dublin will succeed in evicting her from a daily 'sit-out' before the building talking to passers-by.

She's in the third week of a protest which she's prepared to carry on for two months, seated at a table with a display, five days a week during office hours. The row revolves around not the Arts Council itself but its co-tenant the *Aosdana*, or Assembly of the Bards; or as the Irish press sometimes calls it Parliament of Artists.

It sounds like the kind of outfit creative folk in the UK would give their souls for, set up three years ago under the auspices of the Irish Arts Council to 'improve the status of the arts' in part by making government-funded grants of up to £5,000 a year to full-time creative artists who have to be over 30, and either Irish or Irish-resident.

D'Arcy is herself in receipt of such a grant. But since end-'84 she's been voicing a rising anger about what she sees as fast bureaucratisation of the *Aosdana*, making it secretive (an accusation supported in the Dublin *Sunday Express* by artist Molly McAnailly Burke) and resistant to working-class art. She cites the refusal to elect trades union banner painter Jer O'Leary to *Aosdana*.

She in turn is accused by *Aosdana* chair Theo McNab of being 'a hothead who can't get anyone to second her motions' (she *does*, she says, get seconders). The dispute has intensified since the Hillsborough (Anglo-Irish) Agreement, which Margaretta D'Arcy sees as the cue for the Irish arts establishment to try to 'present the image of a mid-Atlantic culture with no ragged-arse wild Irish'. She's calling for a public debate on the state of the arts.

Andrew Lumsden

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South Africa

Buthelezi tries it on with his sweetheart union

Last week's launch of the United Workers' Union of South Africa (UWUSA) by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha movement comes as a major political threat to the country's independent union movement in its moment of triumph — the most extensive national general strike in the country's history. PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK files from Johannesburg

ON 1 MAY about one-and-a-half million workers supported the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) call for a stayaway to mark the hundredth anniversary of May Day. It was an ominous warning to employers and the government of black workers' potential to bring South Africa's economy to a halt.

But only a few kilometres away from a COSATU rally in Durban some 70,000 Inkatha supporters attended the launch of UWUSA, which espouses the principles of free enterprise and anti-sanctions. COSATU's strong stand in favour of sanctions and opposition to the homelands system, in which Buthelezi is a participant, and its perceived identification with the African National Congress (ANC) inspired Inkatha to form the rival union organisation.

UWUSA has been condemned by Anti-Apartheid organisations inside the country as being a divisive act from which only the government and employers will benefit. However, the size of UWUSA's crowd contradicted polls which have insisted that Buthelezi's support is waning, even in the predominantly Zulu-speaking townships around Durban.

Camera Press

Chief Buthelezi: relying on ethnic rather than class loyalty

In the Zulu heartland of northern Natal and Kwazulu there's little doubt that many thousands of workers will join UWUSA if they have to choose between allegiance to the ethnically-based Inkatha and to COSATU. UWUSA is also likely to receive support from Zulu migrant workers in the industrial areas around Durban and Johannesburg, but isn't likely to be a contender elsewhere. Nor is it certain that it can hold on to the support it will receive.

Threadbare claims

While UWUSA has the ability to damage COSATU its credentials as a trade union are threadbare. For more than a decade COSATU affiliates have been developing worker organisation and winning concrete battles on the shopfloor. UWUSA has virtually no experience in organising workers on the shopfloor and its executive is dominated by businessmen and managers, making it an unlikely body for the furtherance of worker interests.

General Secretary Simon Conco is Inkatha's chief whip in the Kwazulu legislative assembly, himself a successful businessman in the township of Ulundi outside Durban. And while many employers are quietly pleased by the formation of a trade union which has their own interests at heart — free enterprise and opposition to sanctions — the image of a sweetheart union could be the kiss of death for UWUSA. ●

£500 MILLION IN THE NICK OF TIME — A SOUR JOKE

Britain's worst-ever prison riots have left the central feature of the government's prison-policy, its jail-building programme, unscathed, notes STEPHEN SHAW. And Labour isn't speeding to do a demolition-job on that programme . . .

BUILD MORE NICKS and the courts will fill them up. It's one of those rules-of-thumb which probably applies in any political climate, but is sure to against a background clamour for deterrent sentences and 'law and order'. Labour's Front Bench seems not to be seizing on that rule-of-thumb's significance in order to attack a prison-expansion programme supposed to 'solve' over-crowding.

The £500 million allotted to constructing up to 20 new prisons is the most prominent element in Conservative law and order spending — and one of the most protected components in public expenditure. Successive Home Secretaries assert they're making up for 'years of neglect' in funding the jail-system. The arithmetic is more than suspect.

Experience suggests that courts interpret new prison construction as an endorsement of 'get tough' sentencing. A crude Parkinson's Law may not apply but there's every likelihood that any increase in the number of prison places will be matched by rising numbers of prisoners.

Something of the kind has actually occurred over the past 18 months. Home Office projections of the future size of the prison population have hurriedly been revised upwards and the predicted end to cell-sharing postponed well into the next decade.

The vast majority of the new jails

are anyway designated to be long-term 'training' prisons. Home Office policy confines all the overcrowding to the short-term and remand prisons, so no relief there. The Comptroller & Auditor General has recently revealed that the decision to build three of the new prisons formed part of *no* overall strategy; and that one of the main factors in getting on with them was the ease with which planning permission could be obtained.

In other words, the parrot-cry 'solution to over-crowding' is simply a convenient, sleight-of-hand, peg on which to hang a building programme which has *actually* resulted from a coincidence of interests between the Home Office — which like any other bureaucracy ever seeks to expand its empire — and a government in search of the most visible symbol of its commitment to law and order.

A politician's ramp

Contrary to the impression which is being given the prison system has never been starved of resources. Since 1945 it has consistently been favoured relative to total public spending. What the present building boom does is to continue a trend by which resources are endlessly poached from the decrepit Victorian jails for mis-allocation to new 'prestige' projects. For example, the planned renovation of Wandsworth, the largest and probably the worst prison in the UK system, has been put off indefinitely following the addition of yet another new institution to the programme last summer.

Investing in more jail properties has nothing to do with improving real conditions: it's a policy to expand the penal estate. This has been more readily appreciated on the Right than on the Left. In a trenchant critique the *Economist* has condemned the Conservatives' building programme as 'a politician's ramp, and a sad waste of public money'. It's time Labour too woke up to how feeble the 'reasoning' behind the new prisons really is. ●

Stephen Shaw is Director, Prison Reform Trust

NEC rebels take Militant to task

MARGARET BECKETT, co-author of Labour NEC's minority report on Liverpool, has joined with NEC colleagues Eric Clarke and Michael Meacher in a trenchant criticism of Militant's politics. Castigating Militant tendency for its 'reactionary' attitudes, they accuse it of consistently supporting the right.

Whether in its attitude to gays, blacks and women to Northern Ireland, import controls, pay or nuclear disarmament they find the tendency's politics repugnant.

The statement is intended to make clear that opposition to the forms of the Labour Party's disciplinary hearings on Militant should in no way be construed as support for the Trotskyist group. While the three remain opposed to expulsion on ideological grounds they are now largely satisfied that the re-vamped hearings for 21 and 22 May have taken account of their fears about procedures.

Signalling yet another stage in the re-alignment of Labour's left the move is also designed to head-off a possible backlash at this year's conference against left policies and candidates — which they fear might suffer from a spurious identification with Militant.

Ian Williams

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Newsnight falls for unionists' PR ploy

THE HAIR-RAISING portrait of the Ulster Defense Force (UDF) transmitted by BBC *Newsnight* last Thursday 1 May is a fine example of how perfectly Northern Ireland's media-conscious natives can now delude the visitor if assisted by even a trace of gullibility.

The uninstructed mainland viewer heard of 'Europe's largest army preparing for civil war' if the Anglo-Irish (Hillsborough) Agreement isn't scrapped — an army with a political wing moreover, along the lines of the IRA-Sinn Fein.

But it isn't quite like that. In the Loyalist paramilitary world the UDF, as soldiering wing of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), is a joke, its only exploit to date a bungled assassination attempt on Gerry Adams.

Newsnight's well-informed local journalist's remark that actually the UDF is short of arms and explosives and long only on brawn got down-played in favour of 'action shots' from the UDF's own self-serving training video.

Real strength

The UDA's true estimate of their own strength and cohesiveness was visible for anyone who cared to see this week in Northern Ireland. *They* were the people who called off the threatened Loyalist march through a Catholic district in Portadown planned for last Monday which would once again have pitted Protestants against the police.

They argued, as they did before the Easter Monday march which unleashed weeks of Loyalist/police clashes, that they would be left to carry the blame and the prison sentences. Since the UDA was responsible for most of the intervening attacks on RUC homes, and the more enthusiastic and far more serious attacks on isolated Catholic families, they had to be listened to.

Barflies

In truth the para-military group — 7000 members at the very most including the rawest of recruits and the most inactive barflies — is as divided on strategy in the face of the Anglo-Irish Agreement as the other elements of Unionism.

Telly pictures of training for Doomsday, with lots of uniforms and fresh air is good for the image and brings in recruits — yes. But for years now most UDA energy has gone into running drinking clubs, taxis, racketeering on a wide scale, making the money to keep the families of the 80 lifers the last spate of sustained violence cost them, and a profit besides. The boys have grown soft, the guns rusty.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement failed to stir as much outrage in UDA leaders' breasts as you might expect, and they are still split on how seriously to take it, almost 50-50 within Belfast itself where they are strongest. Why bring more police attention than business can stand?

Early emphasis on attacking the RUC shifted fast to more popular, less dangerous Catholic targets. The arguments continue on how much the para-militaries should lend their brawn to Unionist politicians who have so signally used and discarded them in the past.

'Doomsday' on past and present forms alike is far more likely to be a messy series of bombs in pubs and assassinations of Catholics, more a matter of doors chopped down at 4 am by hooded gunmen than any grand slam through the countryside by disciplined, politicised khaki clad shock troops.

Fionnuala O Connor

Unions poised for polarisation via merger?

LOOK OUT for a rising trend in the political polarisation of trades unions through amalgamations. Following Bill Jordan's election as president of the AUEW just as it reverts to its old title of Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) he wants to unite with the electricians (EETPU).

It's clear this follows political rather than industrial logic since the white-collar engineers' TASS was frozen out of the AUEW merger because it *appoints*, rather than elects, its officers. Such at least was the allegation. But does the EETPU elect? No, it appoints.

Of course the real reason for freezing out TASS was its left-leaning politics. It's been vacuuming up other left or communist inclined unions among sheet-metal and, most recently, tobacco workers. Despite the latter initiative ASTMS (which incorporates the medical practitioners' union!) is deep in amalgamation chat with TASS.

Together, TASS/ASTMS would be one of the biggest unions in the TUC though still topped by a united right-wing AEU/EETPU. Is the trades union movement shaping up for merger-fed divisiveness along political lines? This could be the one to watch in '86.

Ian Williams

MISCELLANY

Resistance in vain

The spotlight on Lyndon LaRouche — 63-year-old American far-far-righter apparently self-invented to make Reagan look well-balanced — had better move to Wiesbaden, W.

Lyndon La Rouche

Germany. That's where he has the European HQ of his odious *Executive Intelligence Review*. Listen to how they chase up subscriptions to that weekly (and think of the funds they must have to do it this way). Last autumn, well before this week's burst of publicity about him, an *NS* acquaintance ill-advisedly left his London home phone number with two German women running a pro-NATO stall in Rome's Via Condotti. He got a series of phone calls from Wiestaden to London urging him to take up subs to EIR so he'd know 'how the West is being sold out'. And then he found that a woman friend who *also* ran across LaRouche recruiters on the Continent was being pursued by phone calls as far as her boy-friend's home in Italy. Both, need it be said, rapidly learned to detest the organisation and its mag.

The *Face* that launched . . .

Designer socialism means G & T at £1.75 a glass if the grand New Socialist *relaunch party at London's Mountbatten Hotel last Thursday is anything to go by. Even half pints of lager were a quid beneath the chandeliers in Covent Garden.* Miscellany *dodging the camera making a* New Socialist *video heard mutters about the Labour Party mag's new Bodoni typeface chosen by* Face*-designer Neville Brody: 'Looks nice, can't read it'. Another overheard huff & puff: 'It's very odd reading serious articles about socialism in a pop-style paper'. So much for the new youth-style generation. There were only two under 25s there as far as we could spot, both in black tie dishing out the samosas. Fred Halliday, authority on the Middle East for the* NS *among others, wore a 'Proud to be 40' badge. Neil Kinnock, Glenys Kinnock, Ken Livingstone, Stuart Hall and Eric Heffer, for the fuddy-duddys, weren't there. Someone forgot to ask Brody. Best-looking leftie present was Maxine Molyneux, hunkiest was Larry Whitty. Or vice-versa.*

Loony bins

Neat trick in Tottenham High Rd this week. As Bernie Grant fights for Bruce Grove in the wake of the Broadwater Farm 'Tottenham riots' and as the Conservative campaign HQ pollutes the neighbourhood with its 'Fightback Education Special' leaflets reading *Aids is a Killer* and *You do not want your child educated to be a homosexual or lesbian* (shome lexicographical error there, surely?

— Ed) the rival Labour stall at activists corner has stuck a *Tory Rubbish Here* label onto the handy nearby pavement waste-bin. It's overflowing.

Account rendered

When Afro-Caribbeans are reduced by perceived racism in the clearing banks to trying to set up their own bank in London these days, even the white eye, generally blind to these things, may spot the crass ill-judgement in the full-page recruitment ad by accountants Peat, Marwick in the Guardian *this week. A young male graduate and a young female graduate, both white, are shown as the sort of people Peat's are looking for. And over to the* Financial Times*, another full-page Peat's ad, selling its services: picture of 36 partners of Peat, Marwick mugging to camera. One woman. All white. And white socialists wonder why Louis Farrakhan goes on about Blacks' needs for ethnic financial institutions/businesses.*

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SCRUTINY

IS COMMUNIST DECEIT WORSE THAN CAPITALIST?

'SHOCKING how secretive the Russians are about the Chernobyl diaster,' chorused Western leaders at the Tokyo summit this week, hoping to divert attention from the general issue of nuclear safety. Their hypocrisy is manifest, say ROB EDWARDS and DAVID LOWRY. The history of nuclear accidents in the West is characterised by *precisely* the same kind of secrecy and deception

In 1957 Britain experienced its worst ever nuclear accident in a military plutonium production reactor at Windscale in Cumbria — an accident that has been repeatedly compared with Chernobyl in recent days. Because of an operator error, the uranium and graphite in the core were engulfed in a fierce uncontrolled fire for at least two days, releasing amongst other things some 20,000 curies of iodine-131 into the atmosphere. On the command of the government some 2 million litres of milk from an area over 50 square kilometres round the plant were poured into the sea.

A contemporary analysis shows that the behaviour of the Atomic Energy Authority, the operators of Windscale at that time, was just as crass as that of the Soviet authorities last week. In a vitriolic article for *Contemporary Issues* in 1958, Andrew Maxwell concluded: 'The AEA, together with other official bodies, has been responsible for one of the most dastardly conspiracies in the history of Britain in concealing from those living in the Windscale area (and also from the general public) the horrifying danger in which they stood.'

He accused the AEA of making statements that their own later disclosures betrayed as 'downright lies, or treacly equivocations designed to forestall expressions of anxiety with sweet-sounding reassurances'. There was, said Maxwell, a 'sinister attempt by those responsible to protect their petty minority interests at the expense of the general welfare'.

Radioactivity was being released into the atmosphere for at least 24 hours before any public announcement was made. The first official statement stressed that the radiation released was not hazardous to the public and said that it has in any case been 'carried by the wind out to sea'. It was later revealed that the main radioactive cloud had in fact travelled south east across most of England and on to Europe. Military researchers in Denmark detected considerably increased levels of radioactivity due to the accident.

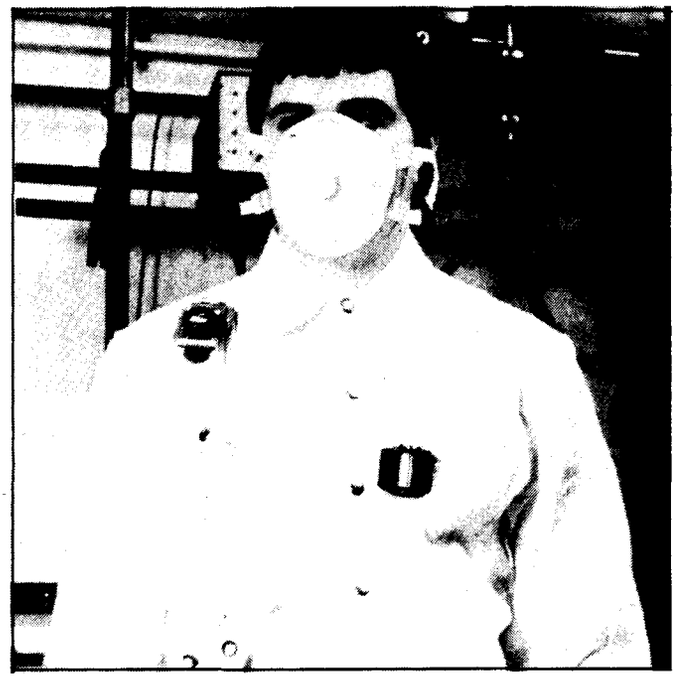
Theoretical deaths

The full truth about the health effects of the accident were not revealed until 1983 — some 26 years later. The National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) published a study which estimated that the radiation released could 'in theory' cause about 260 cases of thyroid cancer, 13 of them fatal.

This study was immediately criticised by John Urquhart of Newcastle University who pointed out that the health effects of one of the radioactive materials released, polonium, had not been taken into account. The NRPB was forced to produce an addendum to its study which admitted that the death toll could in fact rise as high as 33.

The record of other Western countries is no better. The fiasco that surrounded the release of information about the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 is common knowledge. Less well known is the failure of the US Atomic Energy Commission in 1973 to inform the President, Richard Nixon, that there had been an accident at the San Onofre nuclear plant just two and a half miles from his West Coast retreat. In Germany it took nearly three months for the nuclear industry to explain fully an accident at the Biblis nuclear plant on the Rhine in 1975.

Secrecy is an inherent characteristic of nuclear power, whether it is run by capitalists or communists. It is the nature of the technology itself — dangerous, centralised, highly complex and inevitably associated with the military — that ensures that the public are always likely to be kept in the dark. ●



Health and Safety *magazine*

Sellafield nuclear worker with face mask and personal air sampler: now have to be worn by everyone who enters Sellafield's B30 building to keep below safety limits under new regulations, which require internal and external doses of radiation to be added together

There's no such thing as 'safe'

WHAT *IS* this 'permitted' level of radiation that official spokespersons are so reassuring about? Funny you should ask. It's just been cut by a factor of five by the National Radiological Protection Board, from 5 millisieverts a year to 1 for members of the public.

It's not as simple as that — that wouldn't be in the nuclear industry's interest — because the permitted level for *one* year is still 5 mSv, but now the average over a lifetime should not be more than 1 mSv a year. The permitted annual dose for workers in the industry remains 50 mSv (they're fit and 'know the risks').

The reason for the change is that the international body which asserts authority in such matters has changed its recommendation. We've been unable to find out why. Whenever nuclear apologists refer to 'international standards', they mean those set by the International Commission on Radiological Protection, which has no official status under the United Nations or any other treaty. It was set up by the nuclear industry at the time of atmospheric nuclear tests in the 1950s.

The Commission is a self-perpetuating body of 13 men (sic), drawn from 'far too narrow a circle of scientists' (Sylvia Collier, *New Statesman*, 22 February 1985). Its members tend to be physicists or medical doctors rather than biological or environmental scientists.

Until last month, the Commission's 'permitted' levels of radiation had been unchanged since 1957. The first major study to suggest these levels were too high was a 1976 investigation of cancers in 32,000 workers at the Hanford nuclear reservation in the US. It was carried out by Dr Alice Stewart, who was the first to show that babies X-rayed in the womb have an increased risk of cancer.

This was reinforced by a British study published last year. The government-financed Medical Research Council tracked 40,000 employees of the UK Atomic Energy Authority between 1946 and 1979, and found that permitted radiation levels for nuclear industry workers (the level that *wasn't* changed last month) could underestimate the risk of radiation-induced cancer by 15 times.

What's much worse is the inability of official agencies in Britain to relate 'permitted' levels of radiation to the effects of the Chernobyl cloud. Amid a blather of rems, rads, becquerels per litre and nanocuries all they have come up with (as we go to press) is an injunction not to drink rainwater.

The lack of accurate, comparable information has left the media to fall back on the nonsense of 'background levels' of radiation — a propaganda drive of the nuclear industry to convince us that we are surrounded by 'natural' radiation. The British students returning from Kiev were said to have 50 times background levels of radiation on their clothes. But background levels vary, and don't include things like plutonium.

John Rentoul

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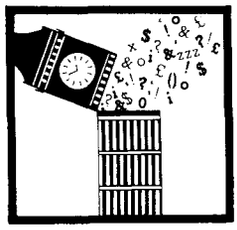

Why 'the Ponting question' could embarrass Labour

PETER KELLNER

FOR THE PAST few months an all-party group of MPs have been contemplating what might be termed 'the Ponting question': when, if ever, is it right for civil servants to disobey their ministers and break the rules?

The MPs are members of a sub-committee of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee. What normally happens on these occasions is that MPs produce their findings, which are summarised in the upmarket newspapers, discussed (occasionally) at a sparsely attended debate in the House of Commons, and then forgotten.

It would be a pity if the work of the small group of MPs, whose meetings have been chaired by Austin Mitchell, were to disappear into the ether in the normal manner. For 'the Ponting question' touches not just on the events leading to the acquittal of Clive Ponting himself: it concerns the ability of any radical government to secure the support of Whitehall for its policies.

Ponting's 'crime' was to assist Tam Dalyell's campaign to show that the government had lied over the sinking of the *Belgrano*. As an assistant secretary at the Ministry of Defence, Ponting had access to most of the government's secrets. He felt that ministers were wrong to lie, and that the best way to expose their deceit was to remain in his post and write to Dalyell.

Like most people who read the *NS*, I was delighted (and surprised) when Ponting was acquitted of breaching the Official Secrets Act. The jury evidently disagreed with Mr Justice McCowan's assertion that the national interest was whatever the government of the day decided it should be. The judge said that civil servants are servants of their ministers — and no ifs or buts. The jury replied, in effect, nuts: ministers are not always right; and civil servants who defy them are not always wrong.

For anyone who likes to see the present government taken down a peg or ten, the jury spoke well. 'Orders are orders' has always been a morally bankrupt posture: bad orders ought to be resisted. Sir Leo Pliatzky, then at the Treasury, who later became a permanent secretary at the Department of Trade, wrote of Britain's collusion with France and Israel to invade Egypt in 1956:

> This was the only occasion in my time in government service when I had to reflect how the British civil service, with its commitment to work for the government of the day, irrespective of its policies, differed from officials in Hitler's Germany who had helped to carry out the Nazi atrocities.

Ponting, in his recent book *Whitehall: Tragedy and Farce**, quotes Pliatzky's comment, but adds that Whitehall's attempt at an independent moral position added up to less than a row of beans. Sir William Armstrong wore a black tie for a few days and William Clark resigned as Sir Anthony Eden's press secretary. And Clark was not even a career civil servant. Had there been a *real* Whitehall revolt against Eden's deception, maybe the Suez fiasco could have been averted.

But wait: if we accept that civil servants have their own consciences and their own loyalties, independent of the instructions they receive from their political masters, do we not start on a slippery slope? What if a future Labour government were to embark on policies that the officials directly affected felt deeply and genuinely to be wrong, to be — in their professional and moral judgement — against the national interest?

What of the defence official who felt passionately that Britain's security would be undermined if we decommissioned Polaris and sent cruise missiles back to the US? Or the Treasury mandarin who honestly believed that Chancellor Hattersley's economic policies would lead to runaway inflation and the collapse of sterling? Or the civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture who judged that Britain's farmers would be ruined by Labour's plans to reform the Common Market's agricultural policies?

Would we allow those officials the freedom to observe a higher loyalty than to the government of the day, or would we insist that 'orders are orders'?

ONE CONVENTIONAL answer is fair as far as it goes, but does not cover all contingencies: that any civil servant who cannot implement the government's policy with a clear conscience should resign. The act of resignation removes the responsibility for doing something that an official believes to be wrong; but it does not erase the knowledge of what ministers are up to. Had Ponting resigned from the Ministry of Defence two years ago and slipped quietly into obscurity, he could have saved his soul, but done nothing to bring the *Belgrano* deceits to light.

Doubtless that is what Sir Robert Armstrong, the Secretary to the Cabinet, would have advised Ponting to do. In his memorandum to Mitchell's committee, Armstrong takes as his starting point the assertion that 'civil servants are servants of the Crown. For all practical purposes the Crown in this context means and is represented by the government of the day . . . The civil service as such has no constitutional personality or responsibility separate from the duly elected government of the day'. Armstong pursues the logic of this statement to argue that civil servants should always obey the ministers to whom they answer. If they did anything else, British Government As We Know It would collapse. This is presumed to be a Bad Thing.

Armstrong's logic is faultless. His weakness lies in his axiom that whatever ministers decide is right, because they are elected. The electoral process is deemed to legitimise *any* action by the government of the day because, in the final resort, voters can turf it out of office.

A crucial part of Ponting's case was that this doctrine is false. In particular, voters can only make a rational judgement on a government if ministers tell the truth. Ministers have no electoral mandate to lie; and, if they tell whoppers and are not caught, then voters are asked at the following general election to reach a verdict on the basis of defective evidence. Ponting's specific conclusion is that ministers should not lie, and, if they do, civil servants have a duty not to participate in the deceit.

Put in this way, Ponting's experience seems to point to a specific and defined exception to the general rule that what ministers say, goes. In fact, the argument goes far wider. Almost all sensitive government activity involves deciding what to tell the public and when: the unauthorised disclosure of information is always liable to have a political effect. How and where should the line be drawn between the proper control of confidential information and the improper concealment of what the public has a right to know? And, on a day-to-day basis, who should decide?

Moreover, Ponting's view that civil servants should not help ministers to tell lies undermines the absolute view that ministers are right, whatever they do. If it is wrong for ministers to tell lies, is there anything else it is wrong for them to do — when it is therefore right for their officials to disobey them?

Armstrong's anti-Ponting position is one that might comfort an incoming Labour government wanting reassurance that Whitehall will obey its orders. His authoritarian view should be resisted, however. What is needed is a morally more robust relationship between ministers and officials. The gap in Armstrong's argument is that he never addresses the question: what is it proper, and what is it improper, for ministers to do? If we are to construct a new post-Ponting set of rules for civil servants, it only makes sense if at the same time we devise sensible rules for the politicians they serve. □

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THE COMPANY THEY KEEP

A new general secretary and a new old name — the AEU — mark the latest shift of the engineers towards a right-wing union block. MONICA BRIMACOMBE looks at the successes of a ten-year strategy to change the union world

OVER A DECADE ago, in an unprecedented effort to effect changes within the labour movement plans were made to mobilise the right-wing members of trade unions. Alongside legitimate campaigns espousing the 'moderate' cause, others, financed largely by Tories and industrialists, set out to influence and alter the structure of the TUC.

One consequence of that influence was the TUC's failure to suspend the electricians' union, the EETPU, from the TUC for their role in the Wapping dispute. The General Council's decision was an acknowledgement of the ability of the Right to organise within industry outside the TUC.

The emergence of a viable alternative to the TUC — an alternative recognised by industry — has created a crisis at Congress House and prompted their pragmatic rather than principled response to the EETPU's activities. This long-sought endorsement of the 'new realism' marks a qualitatively new move from class conscious trade unionism toward 'company' or collaborative unions: a shift in direction for the TUC which the Right has worked to achieve since the mid '70s.

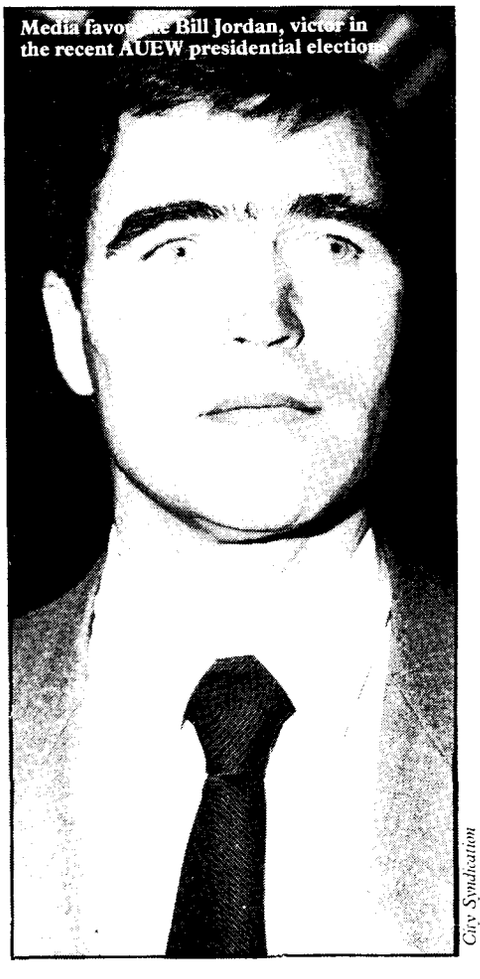
Several organisations have worked for this shift. Perhaps the most significant one today is Mainstream, an organisation supported by Eric Hammond, EETPU leader, which consolidates and promotes the interests of unions which are not affiliated to the TUC. Its officers include Bill Jordan, newly elected AUEW President; John Spellar, EETPU National Organiser, and Roy Prendergast, financial adviser to the Notts working miners during the coal dispute.

At the Joint Industries Board Conference in April 1984, Spellar spoke on 'The Union in the Year 2000' and made reference to the EETPU's relationship with the TUC: 'A growing tendency towards insularity could bring into question the union's relationship with the TUC . . . the value of the TUC could seem to be diminished. Alternatively, the TUC could adjust its priorities and overheads.'

Indeed, it seems that the EETPU's support for Mainstream is less an effort to secure a soft landing for the union should it be expelled from the TUC, and more an assertion of the union's desire to challenge and change TUC policy: if they, and unions like them cannot be accommodated within the structure of the TUC, they will operate successfully outside it.

Mainstream, like the EETPU, has strong links with the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) and is fronting a campaign to get them accepted into the TUC's fold. In fact, the two unions held a joint conference on energy in January this year — just before the Wapping dispute began, and Eric Hammond was so confident of his union's continued membership of the TUC and the pliable nature of the organisation that he stated: 'What's the point in moving away from an organisation that is starting to agree with us?'.

Hammond's confidence was well placed: no disciplinary action was taken over their Wapping recruitment, and similarly, despite protests from the affiliated National Union of Mineworkers, the EETPU's relationship with the UDM is not being challenged. Indeed, Eric Hammond will address the UDM Conference at Buxton in June this year. He will be sharing a platform with Lord Marshall, (ennobled by Mrs Thatcher) the Chair of the CEGB, who vehemently supports the expansion of the nuclear industry and the import of cheap foreign coal, and Ian MacGregor, of the National Coal Board.



Media favourite Bill Jordan, victor in the recent AUEW presidential election

City Syndication

Though both the UDM and Mainstream wish to distance themselves from the discredited Working Miners' Committees formed during the dispute — their links with the National Coal Board being a source of concern — the organisations are inextricably linked. Colin Clarke, former President of the WMC is now on the UDM's area council.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL of the TUC has not itself initiated this accommodation of the 'new realists' who foster partnerships between employers and unions. The interest of the TUC lies in having an equal and independent role in a *three* way relationship, not being the weaker half of a forced industrial marriage. But this view has left it unable to resist the consensus on the right that they too should operate within the trade union movement. Surfacing through organisations whose ultimate aim is to alter the internal structure of both the TUC and the Labour Party, the Right has mobilised an effective opposition to militants within the movement.

The publications of one such organisation, TRUEMID, The Movement for True Industrial Democracy, illustrates the point: 'Truemid will provide trade union realists with organisation and support, comparable to that which co-ordinates the efforts of the extreme left . . . Truemid has been formed to serve as a counterforce against these mindless militants.'

Predominantly financed by industry, such small organisations have fostered the development of collaborative, US style, company unions in a successful strategy to undermine traditional trade unionism in key industries. A Truemid document explores such collaboration, stating that employers: 'have more right to be involved with the shaping of the unions than have the Communist Party or any other extremist group . . . employer and trade union member are partners in work and have a close identity of interests.'

Recognition of the need for the Right to influence the trade union movement stemmed from events in 1972 — recognised by both the

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Camera Press

Industrial relations Japanese style: *she's* not a 'mindless Militant'

police and politicians as a 'turning point' in industrial relations. The miners' victory of that year, when they broke the government's 8 per cent pay ceiling, was achieved largely through their deployment of mass pickets, drawing on the view that the relationship of workers to employers was essentially one of exploitation. The Right was outraged and initiated several campaigns to counter the effects of further industrial action.

Hence, in 1975, Colonel David Stirling introduced Great Britain 75 (GB75), a clumsy attempt to offset the effects of any general strike, by co-ordinating a volunteer residual workforce, backed by the military, to replace striking skilled labour in key industries. An ex-SAS member, Stirling had many influential friends and contacts in 'industry, commerce and the city' who would help finance the venture. Though he had many media contacts, and the organisation received massive publicity at its launch, not all of this was favourable: the military nature of GB75 made it a difficult product to market.

Within months, another, more subtle approach was adopted at the inspiration of Frank Nodes, assistant to Les Cannon, former EETPU General Secretary who orchestrated the purge of communists in that union in the 'sixties. Truemid was formed in 1975 to 'moderate' the trade union movement through the election of moderate officials.

The Chair and co-ordinator of Truemid campaigns was Sid Davies, a former AUEW official who, along with John Orgier, City financier and former wartime aide-de-camp of Churchill's, was responsible for fundraising. Other Truemid officers came from the trade union movement and included Robert Mathews, former CPSA official, Heather Williams of APEX, Ron McGlaughlin of the AUEW and Arthur Hull of SOCS. Major Tom Adams — a former Tory and Liberal candidate, was also an officer. Colonel David Stirling of the now disbanded GB75 was invited onto Truemid's council so they might court his contacts. Indeed, he often acted as spokesperson for Truemid in broadcast interviews, stating in one with Independent Radio that: 'GB75 had been an entirely negative approach . . . and after having major discussions with a very large number of trade union leaders I became convinced that the way to guard against a strike was to raise the banner of moderation on the shop floor, and to vote for the election of their various officials and thereby create a completely different image of today's trade unions.'

Truemid was financed by industry: the Littlewoods organisation gave £2,000 and promised support for five years; Morgan Grenfell promised £900 per annum over a set period; John Henderson of stockbrokers Cazenove raised more than £10,000 for the organisation. Other contributors included Baring Brothers, Hambros, Phoenix Assurance, Barclays International and builders Waites, McAlpine and GKN. Support was fostered at fundraising lunches, organised by John Orgier for Sid Davies.

Truemid's major base was in three trade unions, the EETPU, the AUEW and the CPSA.One of their 'confidential' documents entitled 'Taking Over a Branch', describes their methods and objectives. They researched the activities of 'a certain white collar union' and found that a particular branch was supporting 'extremist' resolutions. They acquired the names, branch positions held and political affiliations of the branch officers and devised campaigns to oust them from office. This included door-to-door campaigning and literature 'aimed at the housewife as well as the member and will stress the politics of the candidates.' Employers were urged to 'identify and encourage responsible employees to become trade union activists.'

In many cases, the media rallied to support Truemid candidates and endorse their credentials as 'moderate' trade unionists. Woodrow Wyatt, Fleet Street columnist and former Labour MP canvassed in his column in support of the 'moderates' vilifying their rivals. Wyatt is a friend of Frank Chapple, former EETPU leader and Truemid supporter. Other media luminaries from whom the organisation sought support included Sir Alistair Burnett of ITN and Chapman Pincher of the *Daily Mail*.

It is the support of media and employers which ensures that the Right is *not* merely the other side of the left-wing campaigns to win union elections. A recent victim of such collusion has been John Tocher, the Left's candidate in the AUEW Presidential elections. Bill Jordan, the subsequent victor, received enormously more media publicity than Tocher whose candidature was equally serious. Since the union's rules prevent the use of union money for campaigning, candidates rely heavily on the media to put their case. Tocher said: 'I can only really talk to people through workplace meetings but I've been to factories where the employers won't let me in. They'll let Jordan in but not me.'

The alliance between the AUEW (now the AEU again) and the EETPU, with the current talks of a merger, has its history in the Truemid connection and the friendship between John Boyd, former AUEW General Secretary, and Frank Chapple, former EETPU leader. The executive councils of the two unions held a joint meeting in 1977 to discuss plans for changing the internal structures of their unions to favour the 'moderate' cause by giving the executives greater control.

In a letter to Boyd after the meeting, Chapple wrote: 'EC decisions should be final and subject only to *reference back* at national conference . . . the election of officials will have to be considered with a view to a possible combination of our existing systems'. The letter then goes on to describe formulations by the executive to establish 'trade' or 'industrial' groups which might block the adoption of radical objectives at union conferences.

SINCE THAT TIME, the rank and file of both unions have been considerably undermined, branches have been closed and grievances or disputes have been handled by District Committees which are largely under the control of the Executive Councils. One retired senior AUEW official is bitter about

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the influence of groups like Truemid: 'I think they had a big effect. They were well organised and well financed and had easy access to matters concerning the AUEW at an executive level. They conducted tremendous campaigns to secure rule changes in our union, cutting the jugular vein of our union. It's all been well thought out by the Right.'

Truemid's base within the EETPU and the AUEW has been fortified by its connections with other influential right-wing union organisations which joined the industrial fray in the mid-seventies. What drew them together was the belief that trade unions were the base from which socialism would evolve — a possibility which must be averted. Truemid valued their 'working relationship' with Industrial Research Information Services (IRIS) which produces educational and electoral information for trade unionists. Two directors of IRIS are John Boyd formerly of the AUEW and now a BBC governor, director of British Steel and of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, and Bill Sirs, former steel union leader. The organisation maintains a strong pro-nuclear and NATO policy through its publications, and supports the election of right-wing union officials.

Other groups dominated by the right attempted to influence the trade union movement: Action 75, the Centre for Democratic Socialism, Catholic Action and the Moral Rearmers. Sean Geraghty, Secretary of the London Press Branch of the EETPU (which has called for the resignation of the union executive over the Wapping dispute), feels sure that such organisations are responsible for many changes in the trade union movement. 'There is no question about that. We've known for years that sinister forces have been working behind the scenes but we've never been able to prove it.'

Not surprisingly, many of these groups rallied to support working miners during the strike. It was through the Moral Rearmers that David Hart, *Times* columnist, gained introductions and then liaised between the Working Miners' Committee (where he was known as 'moneybags'), and the National Coal Board. He had easy access to the ears of both Ian MacGregor and Mrs Thatcher. Though the Moral Rearmers describe themselves as a 'non-political' organisation, they produce a regular publication on union issues — Industrial Pioneer, and sent a journalist to the 1985 TUC conference in Blackpool. Another provocative visitor to the conference was Roy Lynk of the UDM who was there as a guest of the EETPU at a 'buffet for our friends'.

The influence of small groups like Truemid, posturing within the trade union movement but financed by its adversaries is insidious. Though the Labour Party considered proscribing Truemid for its interference in trade union affairs, they and similar groups are *still* operating within the movement, sheltered by the widespread support for trade union reform but in fact undermining the aims and principles on which the existence of an independent trade union movement must be predicated.

Monica Brimacombe is a journalist for Local Radio Workshop.

COMMUNITY ROMANCE

Stick 'community' in front of it, from art to zoo, and it's a noble endeavour. Mix women with it and it becomes a return to the hearth. MARY CHAMBERLAIN inveighs against the dangers of 'community politics'

THERE IS A new age of romanticism. The 'volk' of the 19th century now appears in the guise of community and as such is the inspiration and legitimation of much human endeavour. Attach 'community' to the words art, theatre, politics and no more need be said.

Women within this have been returned to the misty altar of the hearth. For the new romanticism is also the world of 'post-feminism' where feminism's angry euphoria has dissipated in a sea of uncertainty. While most have no truck with the Gothic models of feminity so idealised in the 19th century, many feminists court the other, 'community' face of romanticism. Political romanticism has bred some ugly children. What will result from this new courtship?

Feminism entered the public arena with a political agenda. It sought to change not just the spirit, but the letter, of the law. For a while, therefore, in the early 1970s, feminism was forced to define its targets — equal pay, sex discrimination, abortion and so on.

But these targets then defined the movement and, once they had been achieved, much of the substance, the unity and the momentum of the struggle was removed.

Much else remained to be achieved but it was continued elsewhere, in the peace movement, in the trade unions, in the academy, in publishing, in groups organised round specific issues, in the traditional political (mainly socialist) parties . . . The variety of forms which the women's movement has taken reflects the strength of feeling, its diversity (always inherent) — but also its dispersion.

For some feminists the chosen political way has been in the 'community', manifested in campaigns for local crèches, in tenants association activity, in local action committees and in claimant groups. This coincided with a trend within socialist parties, particularly the Labour Party, to focus on the locality, to rediscover the 'grass roots'. This coincidence in many cases has been fruitful as socialism has taken on board feminism, and vice versa. The coincidence itself is not the problem. But 'community' is. And it is here that the anxieties must lie, both for feminists and for socialists.

THE 'COMMUNITY', like its conceptual predecessor the 'volk' defies definition. The more it is investigated the more slippery, and murky, it becomes. It may have become 'user-friendly'; but it is not a useful concept except, perhaps, as a hold-all for sloppy thinking on the one hand, and a password for entry into a form of local politics on the other. Indeed, to question its meaning demonstrates at best a churlishness (being pedantic) and at worst, political bad faith. More fundamentally, its murkiness has hidden the dangers and limitations of its use as a political tool. Its slipperiness has enabled it to be appropriated.

A political flowering in the name of community: Islington women campaign against cuts in nursery education

In the context of local politics it reinforces the parochial. Confined geographically to a locality, community politics places first the needs and requirements of those living within its immediate parameters. Within those parameters are other 'communities', of race, of gender, of age (to accommodate them all without acknowledging conflict, produces ever diminishing 'communities').

It is no coincidence that many community activists are women. Many of the community concerns are those which, traditionally, have been women's concerns: childcare, local

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safety, play facilities, environment, housing, health and health support. Many struggles, particularly in inner city areas, attempt to recreate a 'traditional' sense of community. For many there is a possessive, physical sense of neighbourhood territory to be fiercely defended. In many ways, community activity has been an extension of women's 'natural' caring role. And women's struggles too often become synonymous with 'community' politics.

Yet the idea of 'community', the very word, has become part of the popular political vocabularly, of both the Right and the Left. We should always be wary of such consensus. For the Right it represents something noble, something self-sufficient, permeated with the values of self-help and caring. It is seen as united but independent from the State and, by implication, from a wider society and its influences. A community existing in a state of nature, at one with itself. For the Left, 'community' recalls a mythical age of solidarity and involvement, the 'good old days'

Brenda Prince/Format

of 'working class culture', when all were naturally socialist and stood, united and pure, against the enemy of Capital.

'Community' is now part of the essential rhetoric of the Left, evoking nostalgia. Community activism has become not merely a means of change, but an end in itself. And, in the name of community, women have been enabled to flower, politically. The more specific, the more 'community' the community issue, the more right-on politically it has become. Women's political activity has thereby been channelled into a useful role. But it is one unlikely to overturn, except sporadically, the Town Hall. Not many women make it from the Mothers and Toddlers to Councillor, let alone MP. In the Labour Party those who dominate the Executive and the General Committees are anti-sexist, to a man.

The 'Right' looks to 'community' as an assertion of traditional values of gender. Thus returning the elderly, for instance, to 'the community' in practice means reasserting the primacy of domestic roles. More generally and dangerously, the concept of community confines opposition, for national and even regional organisation and resistance is incompatible with a community focus. The notion of community has served the present government very well. It has enabled them to destroy the Metropolitan Counties, to uphold the traditional roles of women, to blame social disorder on the breakdown of 'community' values.

When women identify their political activity with the 'community' their demands are pushed to the margins of public debate. The feminist trajectory stops short at the nearest adventure playground or open space.

But community politics in any case is hand-to-mouth politics; it is local, finite and tactical. It offers perspective, no long-term strategy. It confuses participation with control and offers only an illusion of power. The contemporary emphasis on 'community', for all its idealism and for all its ideological roots in democracy, participation and the women's movement, fits far too comfortably with the rhetoric of the Right. It plays directly into their hands — as well as those of the centralist Left.

NO BRANCH OF the labour movement is unaware of women's struggles, however reluctantly acknowledged. The successes are most marked within the Labour Party, but significantly at local, rather than national, level.

Is it perhaps precisely because the Labour Party is in a state of uncertainty that the women's movement has been able to establish a voice particularly in city Labour parties? Perhaps the Labour Party which will emerge will be a new broad coalition of industrial workers and local community groups. How they will act effectively is still unclear. But at the same time, the Labour Party nationally is seeing regional policy and planning as a strategy most likely to fit with the demands and requirements of Britain in the 1980s and 1990s. Within such a structure it is possible that the women's voice will be heard.

But the Labour Party as it is now may never have the chance to deliver. For the new romanticism which asserts the primacy of 'community' in reality confines women to the political hearth, and confines the Labour Party to a nominal role. It is one thing to have local issues; but a future Labour government has to conduct itself through an over-arching national plan, which includes regional and local voices, but does not let those voices predominate.

The uncritical acceptance of a 'community' focus within the Labour Party generally provides a useful rallying cry, but not a political strategy. It is a focus that many in the women's movement have uncritically accepted. It is a focus that limits them, and will limit the Labour Party. With little chance of a socialist government, there can be little hope for women.

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THE BATTLE AGAINST PRIVACY

By next Monday, organisations and individuals using computerised information about other people should have registered their databanks under the 1984 Data Protection Act. In September 1987, Britons will get a new right to inspect the contents of many files held about them. That right has taken 20 years to establish, in the face of the determined resistance of successive governments and their officials, report DUNCAN CAMPBELL and STEVE CONNOR

PRIVACY, in legislative terms, is a Home Office matter. With a few honourable exceptions, no one in the Home Office, be they civil servants or ministers — of either party — has ever given a damn about personal privacy.

The process of giving British citizens the right to privacy began by accident, as an attempt to head off an MP's private bill on the legal 'Right to Privacy'. It has only now been enshrined in law because British international trading interests in information technology might otherwise have been damaged.

During the two decades of inaction, the Home Office first excluded *all government activities* from being considered as threats to privacy. Forced to broaden the issue, they ruled that Home Office interests, which in fact pose the major threat to privacy — police, immigration and national-security activities — should be wholly exempt from scrutiny. Finally driven to the point of near legislation, they nominated a Home Office official as a suitable protector of privacy against the abuse of personal information.

Dragged by Parliament and public opinion far enough to give the Data Protection Registrar some measure of independence,they robustly fought to ensure that the Registrar had few duties, no powers to speak of and a staff as small as conceivable. To acknowledge that a little useful protection for privacy may yet have come from this process is not to belittle the determined and forthright avoidance of the issue successively displayed by Home Secretaries James Callaghan, Reginald Maudling, Merlyn Rees, William Whitelaw and Leon Brittan.

In February 1967 Alex Lyon MP introduced a Right of Privacy Bill. It failed to get a second reading. But at the same time, the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) launched a privacy campaign; and Justice, the British section of the International Commission of Jurists, started to draft potential legislation.

A more serious threat, from the government point of view, arose in January 1970 in the form of a Right to Privacy Bill introduced by Brian Walden MP. Walden's bill was adapted from the draft by Justice, who had just published a report on privacy and the law. The Walden bill recommended a general, enforceable right to privacy. It attracted widespread support.

Neither government nor Home Office cared in the slightest for this proposal; they reached quickly for one of the regular Whitehall standbys — a Royal Commission. Walden was cajoled into withdrawing his bill during its second reading, so that the Commission might deliberate. The Younger Commission on Privacy was appointed in May 1970, but central government activities were excluded from its terms of reference.

Alex Lyon: started the ball rolling in 1967, with a 'Right to Privacy' Bill. It didn't get a second reading

Younger reported in July 1972, recommending legislation on technical surveillance ('bugging') devices and the rapid creation of a 'standing commission' to keep under review the gathering and handling of personal information on computer.

The Home Office offered no action, but announced a new consultative exercise in order to 'take public reaction and the views of those interested in this matter into account before announcing our conclusions'. A White Paper would be proferred 'in due course'. A general election conveniently intervened before any further action was needed.

The incoming Labour administration in 1974 promised an early White Paper on the issue — no later than the summer. By January 1975, the White Paper remained unpublished. Home Office ministers had found 'a need to re-examine certain parts [of it]'. It was eventually published in December 1975, 18 months late.

A supplement listed central government computers then in use. That it ever emerged at all owed a great deal to Alex Lyon, then a newly appointed Home Office junior minister, who as a member of the Younger commission had signed a minority report recommending stronger protection for personal privacy.

The 1975 Home Office *Computers and Privacy* White Paper was drafted in less than the usually vague terms. It warned that:

> The time has come when those who use computers to handle personal information, however responsible they are, can no longer remain the sole judges of whether their own systems adequately safeguard privacy.

A Data Protection Committee was to be appointed forthwith, with the intention that it should lead directly to legislation for an independent Data Protection Authority. In February 1976, Sir Kenneth Younger was appointed to lead the new committee, but he died shortly afterwards.

His place was taken by the then director of Hatfield Polytechnic, Sir Norman Lindop. The Lindop committee started work in July 1976. Its report described how an independent, statutory Data Protection Authority should be set up; and recommended a range of codes of practice, legally enforceable, to govern the handling of personal data in different areas of concern.

BY 1979, over eight years had passed since the Walden bill, with legislative action successfully avoided. But Lindop offered the Home Office clear recommendations for early legislation, to which the government had earlier said it was committed. The Home Office, however, announced a new consultative exercise so that 'interested bodies' might offer their comments on the report. In effect, all the people whom Lindop had just consulted were to be consulted again.

In January 1979, Home Office junior minister Lord Boston stated that 13 government departments would soon be consulting over 200 such bodies, seeking their views. Home Secretary Merlyn Rees explained that this process might take some time as he did 'not think it appropriate to impose a rigid time limit upon consultation'.

In the event, the new consultations eventually took nearly two years to complete. The Home Office studied the responses; co-ordinated them; and considered their view. By

Brian Walden: tried again in 1970. The government headed him off with a Royal Commission instead

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the time the responses had been fully examined, and a suitable view formed, another general election had conveniently intervened.

Kenneth Younger: chaired the Royal Commission on Privacy. But he died in 1975, before he was allowed to look at computers in detail, or government activities at all

The new government had no policy, a clean slate, and plenty of time to start re-thinking the issue from the beginning.

The new incumbents at the Home Office were, from the department point of view, commendably uninterested in information privacy. They wanted legislation on it like they wanted a hole in the head. But in 1980 the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee examined the history of privacy legislation.

The committee had a particularly arduous time trying to get intelligible information from Home Office witnesses. Home Office Deputy Secretary Ralph Shuffrey was repeatedly asked when legislation would come; repeatedly he answered that it was 'under consideration'. When it was pointed out that a special Council of Europe Convention on data protection would soon be in effect Shuffrey suggested that this provided good reason for further delay:

> It is not necessarily a good idea to have a policy cut and dried before the convention is ready for signature . . .

Despite British delaying tactics in Strasbourg (Mr Shuffrey called it '[action] to ensure that the draft Convention is phrased in the most sensible terms'), the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers approved the Convention in October 1980. Styled the *Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Data*, the new agreement was opened for signature at the start of 1981.

The Convention requires each signatory to have protection legislation, and not to transfer personal data to or from countries lacking such legislation. It prescribes a basic right to individual privacy, in terms broadly similar to the British Data Protection principles.

The Home Office was cornered. Consumer groups, civil rights bodies, medical and other professions, computer operators and users, trade unionists, the information technology industry and other government departments now shared an interest in early legislation.

The Home Office promised an early statement. None came until March 1981, when Home Secretary William Whitelaw conceded that legislation 'in principle' would have to come 'when an opportunity offers'. It would be the minimum necessary to comply with the Convention. But, first, there would be a White Paper, so that the government's views could be discussed and appropriate groups consulted yet again.

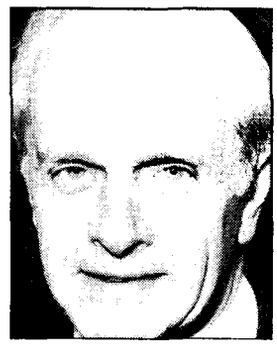
By the start of 1982, 12 years had passed since the Walden bill, 15 years since the issue had been first raised; the European Convention was a year old — and all government action had been successfully avoided. Labour MP Michael Meacher proposed a private member's Data Protection Bill. Like its predecessors, it did not reach a second reading. But an accident of fate now forced political commitment and a timescale for action onto a reluctant Home Office.

The *Sun* newspaper embarked on an exercise in breaching Meacher's personal privacy by hiring private detectives to see how much information they could gather on his personal life. Hedging their bets, they knew the exercise would either yield embarrassing data on his personal life (a good *Sun* story) — or illustrate how even innocuous information could be gathered to the detriment of the citizen (a good shock-horror story).

When the *Sun*'s probe into Meacher's personal life was raised in Parliament, the Prime Minister responded with unusual sympathy and characteristic impetuousness. 'I share your distaste,' Mrs Thatcher told the questioners, adding that legislation was 'urgent'. It was, she pronounced, the government's intention to legislate on data protection in the next session of Parliament. This was the first that stunned and dismayed Home Office officials had heard of it.

NOW THE PROMISED White Paper had actually to be written. It emerged hastily two months later. After years of effort, and a thousand pages of previous reports and White Papers, the Home Office proposals covered scarcely six pages.

The new law, the Home Office then said, would be the 'minimum additional burden



Sir Norman Lindop: chaired the Home Office's Data Protection Committee. Lindop found that central government was the major threat to privacy

that is consistent with proper protection'. Their proposal to put a Home Office official in charge of data protection had quickly been laughed out of court. There would be an independent Registrar.

But the Registry would be small: a staff of 20, and 'less once the Register is established'. Consequently, the Registrar's ability to police personal information privacy would be made impossible as he would 'not have the resources to supervise the operation of data systems in detail'. Manual files and records were to be excluded from the register. There would be no binding codes of practice.

The bill was published in December 1982. The purpose of the bill was to do the 'minimum necessary' to enable Britain to ratify the European data protection convention. Manual records were excluded, but computerised; records of almost every description had to be registered; failure to register was to be a criminal offence.

The Registrar was nevertheless given few formal powers and duties. The bill had failed to make the statute book when the 1983 general election was called.

A new bill, presented quickly by the returning government in June 1983, was described as 'simplified'. Computer information held solely for payroll and accounting purposes was excluded.

In a move to further weaken the bill — which the Home Office were pleased to describe as 'easing the Registrar's workload [and enabling] him to devote more of his resources to the general oversight of data protection' — the Registrar lost powers to enter premises to check on the conduct of databank operators. The new bill required the Registrar to apply to a circuit judge for this purpose.

The bill faced renewed, fierce and well-deserved criticism, particularly from such powerful professional lobbies such as the British Medical Association. The BMA described it as 'a load of holes joined together'. The major features criticised were the total exclusion of manual records, the vaguely drafted definitions and terms of reference, and the numerous and very widespread exemptions.

It was rather doubtful, according to both the National Council for Civil Liberties and Conservative Lawyers, that the bill even achieved its objective of enabling Britain to ratify the European Convention.

The weak position of the Registrar was attacked, and there was renewed pressure for an independent authority, as Lindop had recommended. But if there was one thing the Home Office would not do, it was to accept any part of any of Lindop's suggestions.

As Professor Fred Martin, one of the Lindop committee members, suggested, part of the reason for the eventual disregard of the committee's work was the Thatcher government's whimsical attitude to public-interest organisations:

> The incoming government was committed to the destruction of what it was pleased to call 'quangos'. How useful to manufacture a name like this, a slightly comic, slightly ominous name which enables you cheerfully to demolish some useless, some harmless, but some quite valuable and constructive bodies. How could they contemplate setting up a Data Protection Authority which could be immediately identified as another quango?

The Data Protection Act, Martin predicted accurately, would 'ensure that there is no embarrassment to government activities'. He added his own epitaph to the work of the Data Protection Committee:

> The fact that the report has been so effectively neutralised is a striking testimony not only to political indifference, but to the ease with which some powerful interests can take advantage of that indifference to ensure that their own domain remains inviolate.

The above is an edited extract from On the Record *by Duncan Campbell and Steve Connor, to be published by Michael Joseph on 19 May, £7.95 (paperback), £12.95 (hardback).*

Next week: who's got the data?

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MEDIA

Labour stunned by fair press

PHILLIP WHITEHEAD

THIS HAS BEEN a good week for Mediawatch to watch the media in action, trooping through the Derbyshire dales in pursuit of the by-election candidates. The national scribes gather in the gloaming, buy each other drinks at the bar of the New Bath Hotel, and exchange tales of how they missed the Hartington road and ended up in Cheshire. The substantial presence of Mr Vincent Hanna cruises the valleys, alert for unwary candidates. Every drover in Bakewell market becomes, for these three weeks, a pundit.

How fairly have the media covered this campaign? It has never made the front pages, preoccupied by the explosion at Chernobyl and the last fall-out from the Abdication 50 years before. But on the inside pages, and low down in the TV news bulletins, we have recognised ourselves. The small local papers, the *Derby Evening Telegraph,* the *Belper News,* the *Ashbourne News Telegraph,* and the *Matlock Mercury,* have all filed their stories and taken their photo-calls without discernible bias. Compared with the two by-elections of the Sixties, there has been a greater emphasis on personalities and pseudo-events, following the line of the national press.

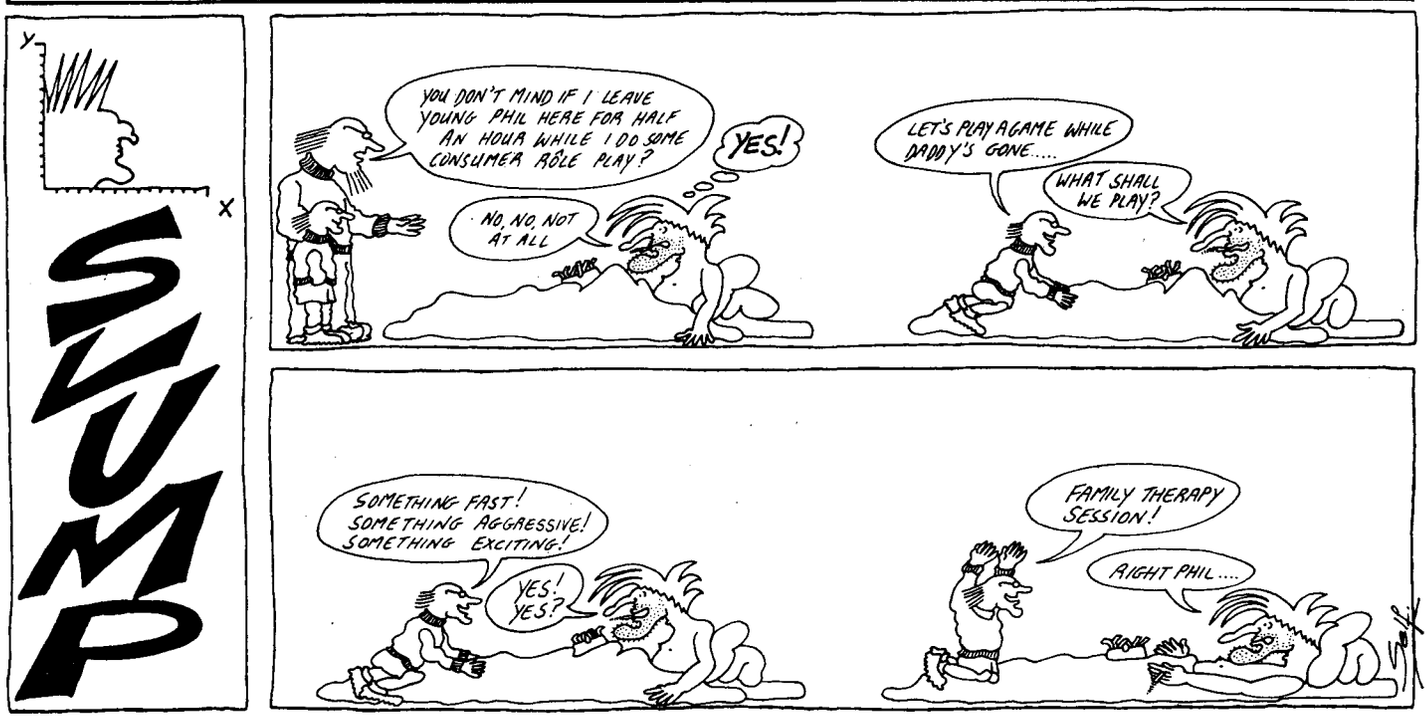
The personalities have tried to oblige. In a deeply Conservative area, a fief of the Cavendish family from 1595 to 1944, the Tories have for the second time running made an incongruous choice in Patrick McLoughlin, 'the miner with the deep blue seam'. He wowed the Conservative Conference in 1984 with his defiant boast that he was a working miner. If he wins he will ironically be the first MP since the miners strike to owe his seat to Arthur Scargill. A lifetime of sherry and twiglets with the matrons of Matlock would await, which all his four predecessors as candidate escaped after a decent interval. We shall know this weekend if his opponents have saved him from this fate.

The press coverage was the fairest I have seen in a by-election. No one dubbed the Labour candidate 'Red Bill' after one half-hearted attempt to link him to the Communists. The early *newsnight* poll, showing all three candidates bunched between 30 and 37 per cent of the vote, was interpreted as a sign this was a three-horse race. When Norman Tebbit walked out of a press conference, or Mrs Edwina went ape at an NUT meeting, describing the Liberal candidate as 'a stupid prat', these details were remarked and recorded. Although journalists prefer the pre-masticated quotes of the morning press conference to the night shift in the hill villages some sense of the issues in the campaign came through; anxiety about agriculture, nuclear safety, local buses and schools, and the sell-off of water in an area edged by great dams. On all such issues Labour could make a mark, and did.

It was allowed to do so, however, for a different reason. At the outset of the campaign the Tories feared the Liberals most. They had been second in the last four general elections and two by-elections. The area seemed well suited to that diffused blandness which is the Alliance stock-in-trade. So the outgoing MP Matthew Parris was put up to say that Labour could well win the seat. Mr John Biffen arrived to add some stately courtesies about Labour's recovery of morale; true, but curiously timed for a by-election. As a result press coverage of the Labour campaign improved.

Just over the hills lies the adjacent Derbyshire constituency of Chesterfield. There too there was a by-election, two years ago. It is an effort now to remember the column inches devoted to the Labour selection processes there, the obsession with the personality and (in the case of the *Sun)* the mental balance of the Labour candidate. Tabloid papers which have given scarcely a nod to West Derbyshire never wearied of Chesterfield. Rumours of splits, reputed sightings of Peter Tatchell, excited every hack in town. The result, in the end, was not much affected. Mr Benn fought a skilful campaign. The Liberal candidate blew his chance, afflicted by something close to rigor mortis whenever he appeared on television. And Labour won, in spite of the overwhelming sense conveyed by the press that the dumping of Benn would make history.

The good press it has received has no doubt been helped by the new look of the Labour Party, strong on freedom, fairness and family, as well as by a professionalism which does not believe that you can glide home on a left wing and a prayer. The mood is inescapable, whatever the result of the poll. Party workers are incredulous to find that this is actually reflected in the press, from which they have always expected more kicks than ha'pence. The experience of being reported fairly is fairly novel to most. But the fact is that these are exceptional times. Just now it has suited the Tories to build up Labour in West Derbyshire and Ryedale. The real test will come later, as this recovery proceeds. It will not be Labour, but the reporting of Labour, which will fail the freedom and fairness test then. □


Y
X
SUMP
YOU DON'T MIND IF I LEAVE YOUNG PHIL HERE FOR HALF AN HOUR WHILE I DO SOME CONSUMER ROLE PLAY?
YES!
NO, NO, NOT AT ALL
LET'S PLAY A GAME WHILE DADDY'S GONE....
WHAT SHALL WE PLAY?
SOMETHING FAST! SOMETHING AGGRESSIVE! SOMETHING EXCITING!
YES! YES?
FAMILY THERAPY SESSION!
RIGHT PHIL....

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DIARY

Ian Williams

Liverpool

A week of aggravated heresy began at the Bath Fabian Society. Suffering from train lag, I said things normally only spoken between consenting adults in private; that nationalisation wasn't the Socialist Millenium, nor even very good training for getting there. I even claimed, in my heady enthusiasm, that there was an essential identity between the Right and the infiltrators in their contempt for ordinary people, the only difference being the tactical one of whether to become commissars or cabinet ministers.

My heresiarch status was immediately undermined. The audience decriminalised Thoughtcrime by agreeing the politics that until recently didn't dare speak its name. The block vote, union affiliation to constituencies, all suffered in a hecatomb of sacred cows. They'll have to plead their own extenuations. Mine was reading a Fabian tract of 1944, a discussion between the centralisers and the Left which anticipated much of the current realignment. Baroness Wootton summed up the practice of the Right for the last 40 years: 'Our job as electors will become more and more a matter of putting people in office for a term of years and letting them get on with it'.

But when did Centralisers, then so clearly of the Right, colonise the Left to the extent of becoming its Orthodoxy? The genuinely radical sentiments of T. W. Agar sound ominously across the decades like Cassandra's prophesies: 'I do not want to see the present trusts and cartels being replaced by State trusts, without the introduction of safeguards designed to maintain genuine popular control over them. God help the Trade Unions if they have to negotiate with a multiplicity of public corporations.' Totally unsoothing to the monopoly nationalisers, it's a soothsaying verified by the squelchy remains of the countless jobs fallen from the nationalised commanding heights of the economy.

○

Going South from Liverpool rubs in the abrasive differences between what the estate agents call the better parts and what the '30s called the depressed areas. Mrs Windsor's uncle went to South Wales and said that something must be done, which is perhaps why the po-faced establishment faked horror at his marrying a divorcée. As Mrs T. has proved, there's nothing unrespectable about intimate relations with Americans. But even Bath has unemployment about which something must be done, despite the Silicon Way's alleged affluence. Tory politics have made poverty an issue for those who are themselves threatened by it, but not for those who feel secure.

It's nastily reminiscent of Jack London's dystopic vision in the 'Iron Heel'. The oligarchs consolidate their power by giving security to the workers they need, consigning the others to a permanent Under Class. The unintended bright spot is that everyone from the Cabinet down is now afflicted with job insecurity.

○

My march on the South brought me to Oxford, where smokeless chimneys join the dreaming spires as relics of happier days. I'd been invited to the 'Ruskin Forum' to discuss whether municipal Socialism was possible. Not everyone there was consenting and adult, however, and I was roundly attacked for denying Socialism in one City by those who allege a subcontinent too small for it. They were in no doubt what was to be done — an all-out strike to bring down the government. I resent the way that Trotskyist centralism has messily and partially digested syndicalism. The IWW, the Wobblies, were attractive for their open-ness, for their courage and for their songs. But Joe Hill wouldn't have sung half so well for a central committee, nor slaved for preachers the way the infiltrators' acolytes toil for their gurus.

○

The Ruskin Forum is designed to be a real world alternative to what goes on in 'another place' at the Oxford Union. Perhaps it will help allay suspicions that the purpose of Ruskin was to take effective shop stewards and turn them into sociology lecturers. Instead of the dispassionate intellectual discussion on the verdant lawns, about the meaning of life,

socialism and things, Ruskin maintains the dialectical tradition of the smoke-filled room. There was an upsurge of outrage against David Selbourne for having written an article in *The Times*. The difficulty was that, since *The Times* is officially boycotted, no one would admit to reading the offending item.

I stopped reading Murdoch's newspapers because they were nasty and shallow even when the NGA, NUJ and SOGAT were happy to produce them. So my heart is at least as pure as those of the 'Good Socialists' who still print News International's colour supplements in Liverpool, while their colleagues are truncheoned by the Metropolitan Cossacks at Wapping. I await the Selbourne Defence.

○

On the train back, I read Peter Hain's book, allegedly about Political Strikes but more about unpolitical unions, which reinforced my iconoclastic mood. It confirmed my prejudice that a socialist party should have delegates to unions, instead of our present system, but coming off the train I met a deep-thinking dialectician — and obvious troublemaker. The Labour Party, he said, was £3 million short while the unions claimed they'd spent all their cash on the political ballots. Why don't they claim the money from the government, and put the boot into Norman Tebbit by ostentatiously passing it on to the Labour Party? After all, in practice the unions have accepted ballots when the TUC conference pledged undying defiance, why not accept money? He will go far. Probably to the stake if he has any more ideas like that.

○

By the end of the week Liverpool city centre is filled with peddlers totally non-partisan in their pursuit of profit. Scarves, ties, rosettes, hats, badges, and streamers, red for Liverpool and blue for Everton festoon the stalls. While the Labour Party stands accused by Derek Hatton of giving up its true, red colour, he'll be cheering for Everton in Blue — with NEC emblazoned on their chests. He'll meet the NEC itself later in the month, but will he cheer then?

ROGER WODDIS

The Magnificent Seven

The Tokyo summit declaration charges terrorism with 'ignoring the values of human life, freedom and dignity'.
The contras making war against Nicaragua practise 'the tie' in which a victim's throat is cut open and his tongue pulled back over his breast bone

In the name of freedom and justice
And all that shit,
We solemnly swear to outlaw
The ruthless grower of coffee,
The teacher whose throat is slit.

We set our face against terror,
We speak as one.
Our sword is the sword of honour,
Our words go down like a bomb
In the land of the rising sun.

The law we uphold is sacred,
An open door
Through which pass the priests of plenty,
A gate that is hinged on gain
And bolted against the poor.

The violent acts of others
We all condemn,
While praising our own assassins,
The honeyed whoredom of Howe,
The murderous madness of M.

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NUCLEAR POWER? NYET, TA

ZHORES MEDVEDEV assesses the fate of the USSR's nuclear power programme — it's internal problems and the reluctance of its East European allies to buy it

THE DISASTER at Chernobyl has affected the whole world. The nuclear reactors can be redesigned and probably made safer, but the public faith in nuclear-generated energy will never be the same.

In 1973, at a hearing before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the United States Congress on nuclear reactor safety, American nuclear scientists and managers estimated that eight Americans die annually from lightning, 2,000 from choking on food, whereas only one person in fifty years was likely to die as a result of an accident at a nuclear plant.

Soviet nuclear scientists have never made similar calculations for the USSR. Information about even the smallest mishaps is highly classified. Some 2,000 mishaps of different types have been recorded in the nuclear related technology in the US, but not a single such case was reported in the Soviet Union before 1979. Indeed many articles on the problem of safety in nuclear power stations published in the Soviet Union insist that the Soviet nuclear safety record is even better than the American because of the larger and better trained staffs which operate the stations around the clock.

In all probability, if the winds over the Ukraine on Saturday 26 April had not been blowing from the east, and if rain had not fallen the following day, at least for the Soviet general media the optimistic picture of nuclear energy would have been untouched. If there is something the Soviet government can do better than any other, it is to control the release of information. Unauthorised release of uncensored information is a punishable crime. In the Soviet Union all people are civil servants and state employees and those in the information and the news machines are also servants of the party.

At the party conference at the State Committee on Radio and Television last year Yegor Ligachev, the new 'Chief Ideologist' and the second-in-command made clear the main task of the media:

> . . . Our television and radio must entirely and fully be political television and political radio. It is, of course, not necessary to make political slogans in every broadcast. But all programmes of television and radio must serve one purpose — propaganda, explanation and realisation in life the party policy. (*Pravda*, 21 November, 1985)

It has been suggested that the failure to report the largest nuclear reactor accident in the human history for more than two days was due to the breakdown in the Soviet communication system. In fact it was an obvious breakdown in the crisis management of the government, Politburo and the Secretariat. All of them faced a huge problem for which there was no immediate solution. It is almost impossible for the Soviet government to report on something which is not under control. Even the German army invasion of the Soviet Union at dawn on 22 June 1941 was not reported by the Soviet radio for seven hours, until Stalin did finally realised that war had indeed begun.

For reasons which it is difficult to understand in the West, the Soviet media have been used to limit the reports about accidents and disasters. The normal minimal coverage never reports the number of casualties in industrial, road, rail, air or even natural accidents. The first report of the Soviet Council of Ministers on Monday 28 April which was first put out by Moscow television and published in newspapers only on 30 March followed the familiar pattern — no mention of the number of casualties.

The second report, published on 1 May, acknowledged two deaths, itself an unusual departure from the norm. But the most crucial information — the level of radiation in the area affected by the radioactive contamination was not reported. This paucity of information is not for lack of the means of assessment and measurement. It was because the final political, economic, international, public health and environmental developments and the consequences of the disaster were not yet clear to the Politburo and the government.

Zhores Medvedev in 1976 revealed a 1950s nuclear explosion at a waste dump in the south Urals; he now lives in exile in Britain

The public health of the local community is secondary to 'the political health' of the country at large and the credibility of the party leadership. This is usual for a strictly ideological society. Even a health hazard, like the cholera epidemic in the Soviet southern regions in July 1970, was not reported until September, when it had already reached Moscow and when four or five divisions of special forces had been deployed to stop traffic and hold the quarantine line for more than 1,000 miles from Kishinev to Astrakhan.

THE ECONOMIC cost of the Chernobyl disaster could also be very high. The nuclear power stations of this particular type (RBWK), which are in principle just larger versions of the first Soviet experimental power stations which became operational in Obninsk in 1954, represent about 60 per cent of the Soviet nuclear-generating capacity (or about 6 per cent of the total Soviet electric power). Several more such stations are under construction.

These reactors were designed in the 1950s under the general supervision of N. A. Dollezhal, who is now a Director of the Institute of the Nuclear Power Stations of the Atomic Energy Committee; A. P. Alexandrov, who is currently a President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and a Director of Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy; and M. S. Slavsky, who was the chief organiser of the Soviet nuclear industry in 1950s and still today remains a minister in the same field. All three are still not retired despite their age (86, 84 and 88 respectively). Gorbachev's drive for the 'rejuventation' of managements has not yet reached the administration of nuclear science and technology.

Only Dollezhal, who was more closely involved in the research and assessment of the reactor performance has since expressed serious reservations about the wisdom of putting nuclear power stations in the densely populated European parts of the USSR. Even under normal operations, RBWK reactors produce large discharges of highly contaminated radioactive water, because the turbines and fuel elements work in the same circuit. Spent nuclear fuel rods in these reactors are also more difficult to deal with, because each of more than 1,000 fuel rods is loaded and removed independently.

In an article in the official party journal *Kommunist* (No 14, 1979), which attracted a wide attention in the Soviet Union and abroad, Dollezhal suggested that it would be economically and ecologically prudent to locate the new nuclear power stations in Siberia, or even in Arctic areas where their generated heat could be more easily used for industrial needs. However, political leaders and economic planners remained committed to the construction of reactors in the European parts of the USSR.

Because power stations usually take from five to seven years or more to build,

The author, who is an exiled Soviet scientist now living and working in London, has published Soviet Science *(1978),* The Nuclear Disaster in the Urals *(1979) and* Gorbachev *(1986).*

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Camera Press

'All radioactive discharges from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia eventually reach the Black Sea, already heavily polluted with radio nuclides'

construction workers and their families come to live in a permanent nearby settlement, which becomes a small town. There was, therefore, a tendency to put a new nuclear power station at the same location to re-employ the labour, even if local energy needs do not require it. Beloyarsk nuclear power station, for example, was built between 1959 and 1964 about 40 miles from Sverdlovsk, an industrial city with a population of over 1 million. It was comparatively small (100 MW), with a RBWK reactor. The same site was later selected for the construction of a larger (600 MW) and modern fast breeder reactor. That project was completed only in 1981. There are large deposits of cheap coal near Sverdlovsk in the Urals and a hydro-electric station in the region was completed in 1980. However, the logistic problems of resettlement of many thousands of construction workers, engineers, project institutes and other organisations in this district caused Sverdlovsk party and state officials to lobby the government for the construction of yet another fast breeder station. An accident in this complex would be even more serious than Chernobyl.

THE CHERNOBYL disaster will certainly affect the Soviet export of nuclear power stations to eastern Europe. It was clear from long-term planning that the Soviet Union could not afford to keep up its high level of oil and gas exports to eastern Europe. The joint plans of the Comecon countries accordingly provided for very rapid development of nuclear power stations.

In 1979 nuclear generated electricity in the USSR was at the modest level of 8,000 MW. In 1983 this figure had risen to over 18,000 MW, which itself was well below the plan. The serious industrial accident in the Atomic machinery plant *Atommash* in 1983 had already delayed the Soviet nuclear programme considerably. *Atommash* was created to build the 'blocks' for new generation of power stations, PWRs of the type more common in the West.

A special 'Complex Programme of Scientific and Technical Cooperation' for Comecon countries expected that the total power of the nuclear stations in East European countries and Cuba would reach 37,000 MW by 1990.

The programme was well behind target by 1985. At the 39th and 41th sessions of Comecon the new programme of 'scientific and technical progress' was agreed and published in December 1985 (*Pravda*, 19 December 1985). The 'acceleration of the development of atomic energy' was now a priority. The Soviet Union was expected to build in Eastern Europe more powerful nuclear stations (1000 MW) and atomic generators for central heating.

The sharp fall of oil prices during the first few months of 1986 and the disaster at Chernobyl will certainly make all countries of this region reconsider their priorities. All radioactive discharges from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia eventually reach the Black Sea which is already highly polluted with radionuclides.

Research in Hungary, East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia is more advanced in many fields of applied sciences and technology than in the USSR. Their natural preference is the co-operation with even more advanced technology and science in the West. All journals of science in these countries (except East Germany) are published in English. Scientists in Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Hungary have freedom of travel to the West.

Soviet plans for the acceleration of nuclear energy programme, approved at the XXVIIth Party Congress, include new projects in the European part of the USSR and the construction of more powerful 6,000 MW reactors in Siberia, based on the Obninsk-Beloyarsk-Chernobyl family of graphite-moderated light water reactors. It is now highly likely that these will be reconsidered.

A serious investigation of the performance of all Soviet and East European nuclear installations is now inevitable. If inquiries, even secret, are carried out seriously, they will reveal many cover-ups of accidents and mistakes made at the local and ministerial levels.

During my life in Obninsk (1963-1973), where in addition to the first Soviet nuclear power station there were several research reactors of different types, there were at least 10 mishaps in reactors and reprocessing facilities which resulted in human casualties. Most of them were not investigated centrally and, until 1983, there was no special state committee in the USSR responsible for safety of nuclear installations to carry out independent study.

The medical network which serves the atomic energy plants and research institutes is separated into a classified department of the Ministry of Health, which never publishes its case reports. These and many other accidents will probably never come to light in the press but they should now be taken into account by the government in the analysis of real economic and human cost of nuclear power.

Neither the Soviet Union, nor the West or the rest of the world, can afford one more serious accident. The problem of nuclear waste is also not solved satisfactorily. After three major disasters in the history of nuclear reactors — Kyshtym in the Urals in 1958, Three Mile Island and now probably the worst in Chernobyl — nobody can now tell the public that a serious nuclear accident is only likely once in 10,000 years.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE

There is a tradition of an Ancient Wisdom relevant, however, to any age and people. It tells of the eternal verities of existence, of Universal processes and laws which are of the nature of Nature herself – of whom we are all part.

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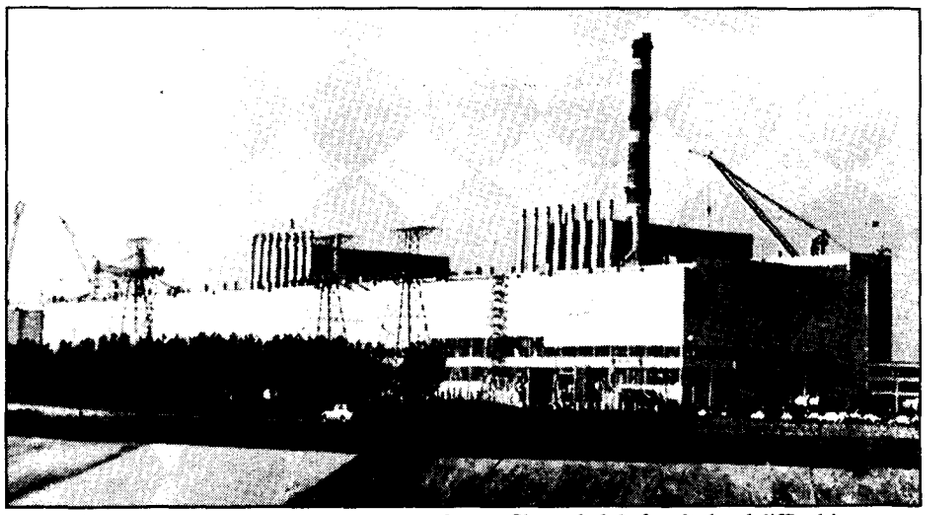
THE SPECTRE OF THE KGB



AP

The nuclear weapons — er, nuclear power — plant at Chernobyl, before its local difficulties

ANDY McSMITH on the lines of power behind the Soviet nuclear industry

THE SECRECY and outright lies which followed the Chernobyl disaster indicate that military secrets are involved — evidence that in the USSR, like any other nuclear power, the civil nuclear programme is a secondary growth from the armaments industry.

Chernobyl, as the first *officially acknowledged* Soviet nuclear disaster, has probably done permanent damage to Gorbachev's hard won reputation as a leader who knew how to appeal to Western opinion and could, to a degree, be trusted. Why, then, did the General Secretary's advisers allow the crisis to be so badly bungled?

The most plausible answer is that even the power of Mikhail Gorbachev has its limits. There are at least two sectors of the Soviet elite which are beyond his reach — the KGB and the military-industrial complex, both of which have a hand in running the Chernobyl reactors.

The complex is closed to any foreign visitors, including inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, who are allowed into other plants — a sure sign that Chernobyl was not only producing electricity, but also plutonium for atomic warheads. In the USSR, as in the West, the civil nuclear power programme is inextricably wedded to security and military interests. In fact, like a creature from a swamp, the whole industry had its gruesome origins in the *gulag archipelago.*

Two classes of worker were involved in the rush to build a nuclear reactor after the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki: a small core of free scientists, enjoying unlimited privileges, even including exemption from political supervision — like the young Andrei Sakharov (now confined in disgrace to the closed city of Gorky); and a mass of slave labourers, including 6,000 Germans forcibly transferred from the Soviet occupation zone.

Whole towns, like Obninsk, where the world's first nuclear power station was opened in 1954, sprang up as special labour camps specialising in the development of weapons. At the head of the operation was the repulsive Lavrenty Beria, Stalin's chief of police; and the nuclear industry was entirely a police operation until Beria's arrest, after Stalin's death in 1953.

Then a new department, cryptically entitled the Ministry for Medium Machine Building, made its appearance. One of its many oddities was that, for a couple of years, it was the only government department known to have been run by a convicted 'terrorist'. The Minister, A. P. Zavenyagin, had been arrested on a trumped up charge in 1937 and freed on condition that he help to organise military production — which was a very effective means of keeping him under KGB control. (The designer of the first intercontinental rockets and the *Sputnik* ran his laboratory under like conditions until 1956).

The KGB's involvement in the nuclear programme has never let up and there is still a special department handling security, and the vetting of personnel. This organisation has been untouched by the Gorbachev purges. In fact, there are now more serving KGB officers than ever before on the party's Central Committee; and their boss, Viktor Chebrikov, is the only member of the old clique from Brezhnev's home province in the Dnieper basin to be promoted since Brezhnev's death.

More recently, there has been a formal separation of civil and military nuclear production. The civil side is now run by the Ministry of Power and Electrification, one of a cluster of agencies involved in energy production, supervised by one of the deputy prime ministers, Boris Shcherbina. They are overseen, at communist party headquarters, by the Department for Heavy Engineering and Energy, which is answerable to a party secretary named Vladimir Dolgikh, a mere candidate member of the Politburo, who occupies about fifteenth place in the top leadership.

This sector has felt Gorbachev's wrath. Half the ministers and countless senior executives have been sacked in the past year. The new minister in charge of civil nuclear power has been allowed a high media profile, including a major speech to the recent 27th Party Congress.

The production of nuclear warheads remains the task of the Ministry of Medium Machines, part of a different group of ministries, controlled by the shadowy Military-Industrial Commission, which is chaired by a deputy minister and overlooked by the Central Committee's Defence Industries Department. The head of the whole pyramid is Lev Zaikov, party secretary in charge of defence industries, who appears to be placed sixth in the top leadership, directly behind the KGB boss.

WESTERN OBSERVERS tend to overstate the political clout of the top Soviet military brass and, consequently, had a shock when the highest ranking professional soldier, Marshal Ogarkov, was suddenly sacked 18 months ago, over a quarrel about nuclear military technology. By contrast, no *minister* in the military sector has *ever* been sacked by *any* party leader since 1957. A few have retired, as the head of the Defence Industries department has just done, after 28 years — but the almost invariable rule is that he is then succeeded by his deputy.

'Marshal' Dmitri Ustinov, a mechanical engineer chosen by Stalin to run the armaments industry in 1941, rose to be in control not only of the entire military machine, but effectively of the Communist Party itself. It was his decision to appoint Chernenko, rather than Gorbachev, as General Secretary in 1984; and to bring in Grigori Romanov, head of the Leningrad party machine, as Chernenko's possible successor.

After Ustinov's death, Gorbachev was able to eliminate Romanov — but only at the cost of replacing him with another functionary from Leningrad — where the regional party has its own Defence Industries department and, traditionally, very close links with the armaments establishment. Otherwise, he has left this sector alone.

The most remarkable survivor in the whole Soviet establishment must be the current Minister for Medium Machine Building, Efrim Slavsky, re-elected in March as the oldest member of the Central Committee. Unlike his counterpart in the civil industry, he is almost never mentioned in the Soviet press; but he was deputy head of the ministry when it was founded, and the minister since 1957. His *nineteenth* birthday was on the day of the Bolshevik revolution; his ninetieth is coming is coming soon.

In a conflict with entrenched interests like these, Gorbachev would have few important

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friends. The Ukrainian party leader is notoriously hostile to the new General Secretary, being another native of Brezhnev's home town, and it may be that local party officials collaborated in keeping Moscow in the dark about the scale of the Chernobyl disaster.

Moreover, the agencies handling the release of information are being overhauled, which is why Leonid Zamyatin, who has run the International Information department for eight years, arrived in London as the new Soviet Ambassador on the very day of the accident. The fledgling commission for 'safe working practices' is of so little consequence that its chairman was not even among the 470 members or candidate members of the Central Committee elected last month.

The fact that the commission of enquiry into the accident is headed by Boris Shcherbina and not someone from the defence establishment may be a small gain for the party leader — but its findings will certainly be kept secret, and any retribution is likely to fall on officials from the local party and the civilian ministries. The defence industries and the KGB will be, as always, untouchable. □

CHINA'S ARMY

THE RED SUN OF MAO SETS

JONATHAN MIRSKY reports on a bid to keep the People's Liberation Army's political role

CHINA'S 76 year-old supreme general, Chief of Staff Yang Dezhi, is not only an ex-comrade of Mao Zedong and a military hero who as long ago as 1934 served as a regimental commander on the Long March. He also remains loyal to the guerrilla tradition: 'Mao Zedong's theory of people's war', Yang said two weeks ago, 'is not out of date and remains a precious heritage of the party and of the army'.

This week he is being entertained in Washington by the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, visiting US bases and training establishments and discussing further arms sales to China, whose navy and air force are already undergoing American 'defensive' modernisation.

Yang's view is no longer in vogue. It was directly contradicted in the same week that Yang spoke by the official magazine *Outlook*, which is participating in the nationwide campaign to persuade the army to submit to modernisation. After the communist triumph in 1949, the magazine observed in a direct attack on Maoist strategic dogma, 'military theoretical study to a very large extent went no further than explaining a certain doctrine or speech of a leader, and certain theories themselves became a kind of religious doctrine'.

This is the opinion of Deng Xiaoping, himself one of Mao's leading military commissars, who has taken care to retain the chairmanships of the country's two military commissions even after surrendering his other supreme posts. Since Chairman Mao's death in 1976, Deng has frequently warned that soldiers armed only with fixed bayonets and the red, red sun of Mao in their hearts can no longer expect victory on the battlefield. Only two years ago the army's top political officer, Yu Qiuli, admitted that a decade or two would be needed before China could defeat its major adversaries on the battlefield.

This demeaning evaluation followed the forces' mauling at the hands of the Vietnamese in 1979. Since then, Deng has annually reduced the military budget. By the end of this year the People's Liberation Army will have been cut in strength from four to three million.

While the army's numbers and budget were being reduced, the Dengists also determined to modernise as many units as possible, beginning with the officer corps. Most of General Yang's comrades in leading positions were 'retired into the second line'. Dozens of academies and staff schools were established and it is now doctrine that no one may be commissioned or expect promotion who has not passed through one or more of them.

It was, therefore, especially embarrassing for Deng when General Yang attacked the slovenly turn-out and lax attitudes of the army he commands and particularly singled out the crack new academies whose cadets 'do not undergo strict training in army appearance and bearing and therefore do not have the ability to train soldiers after they graduate'.

This will be understood in China to be a criticism of the new post-Mao soldier: the better-educated conscript who marched past Deng at last year's May Day celebrations in Peking, no longer in baggy greens and black plimsolls, but in a snappy outfit with gold braid, red flashes, and leather boots. Badly educated but ambitious peasant lads no longer volunteer for the People's Liberation Army; they prefer to make money on their family farms. Such soldiers were, in any event, no longer qualified for an army which was moving into the second half of the 20th century.

General Yang, in speaking up for Mao's theories of people's war, is aligning himself with the faith in a politicised guerrilla army, hallowed by limited success against the Japanese and considerable triumphs, first over Chiang Kaishek, and then over the Americans in Korea. He may also have been sending a message from the military traditionalists, some of the most dangerous adversaries Deng's protégés will have to face if their 82 year-old mentor's policies begin to unravel after his death.

While General Yang is touring American installations and inspecting the latest items in their arms lockers, some of which he will be invited to buy, the old veteran may be thinking about the dimmed charisma of the PLA, which Mao once described as a 'great school' and the ultimate defender of the revolution. Two weeks ago Deng's Deputy Chairman on the Central Military Commission, Hong Xuezhi, advised the army not to expect too much from the state, to devote itself to national economic reconstruction and, for example, to take up livestock breeding. □

After the famine

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The ILO sent an Identification and Programming Mission to the Sudan in September 1985 to examine the ecological and socio-economic factors lying behind the famine. This report comes up with a programme of action based on a developmental approach that aims at increasing the resources available to the country at national level, restoring the population resource balance at regional level and strengthening the survival strategies of the affected population at household level.

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LETTERS

Uncomradely conduct

Francis Ghiles, North Africa Correspondent, Financial Times

Claudia Wright concluded her diary in the *New Statesman* (25 April) with the words 'if the Administration has not killed Gadafy and won its war with Libya by Christmas, it won't be the fault of Cooley and Woodward'.

John Cooley, as your readers may not know, is one of the US press's most respected Middle East specialists, one who furthermore has often been criticised for being too 'soft' on Gadafy, especially after the publication of his book *Libyan Sand Storm* in 1982. Claudia Wright asserts that Cooley wrote, in the *Washington Star* on 18 March 1981, that to stop the 'menance in Libya' the solution was to 'liquidate Gadafy' and 'save the international community' from the 'damage that an unbalanced leader with massive resources can inflict'. I would challenge the *New Statesman* to publish that article — if you have the courage to do so it will give the lie to your correspondent's assertions.

As for John Cooley's 'personal vendetta against Gadafy', it only exists in the mind of Claudia Wright. I would further add that to levy such accusations at a time like this can only endanger the personal security of John Cooley. As such it is a despicable act, especially coming from a 'fellow' journalist.

Bird's eye view

A. J. Clay, London SW17

I was concerned to read the report (*NS* 25 April) of the CND sit-down protest in Oxford Street on 19 April. The event that Jane Dibblin, quoting eyewitnesses, euphemistically describes as 'protestors persuaded a London bus driver to stop trying to drive through [the crowd] and vacate his cab' looked too conspicuously like a member of the SWP (or someone standing under an SWP banner) throwing a half brick through the unfortunate bus driver's cab window.

I was near the bus driver when the police persuaded him to drive his bus behind the police motorcycles into the crowd. He seemed clearly uncomfortable and anxious about this use of his bus. I was quite disgusted by this unprovoked attack on an innocent bus driver and felt ashamed to be associated with the crowd that gleefully cheered this event. To say that the crowd 'persuaded' the bus driver to vacate his cab is a bit like saying that Hitler 'persuaded' Jews to leave pre-war Germany in the 1930s.

Given the number of articles printed in the *NS* that are based on information not readily available to the public, Jane Dibblin should be more careful to report the truth and to avoid hiding painful realities under biased rhetoric.

Snakes need support too

A. C. Hall, Dallas, Texas, USA

Please allow me to tell your readers that Francis Wheen has done rattlesnakes a grave injustice by suggesting that they are untrustworthy, indecent, or in any significant way like Rupert Murdoch (*NS* 11 April).

Rattlesnakes are so named because of their reliable behaviour. When disturbed, they retreat; when alarmed, they rattle; when struck, they strike back. To unprejudiced eyes, they are very beautiful; and they have much to teach mankind about proper conduct toward fellow creatures. No one could claim as much for any press baron that I know of.

We made the difference

Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, USA

As critics who have long admired Catherine Belsey's work and have read it with some care and attention, we were disappointed that she did not extend the same consideration to our work. Had she read the inroduction to *Making a Difference* (and her review *NS* 28 March gave little indication that she had read either the introduction or the book), she would have found in it the very position that she herself was arguing but that she seemed to be dismissing our book for not expressing — that feminist criticism is a critique of culture (indeed, she would have found her own work liberally enlisted in support of this view).

Had Belsey not been so eager to lump our book in with Elaine Showalter's as demonstration of the inadequacy of American feminist criticism, she might have noted that our introduction expresses reservations similar to her own about some of Showalter's positions. She might also have noted that we argue (as she herself seems to be arguing) for 'a criticism [which] would question not whether a literary work has been written by a woman and reflects her experience of life' [as Showlater puts it] but 'the way the text works as a signifying process which inscribes ideology' and for 'a theory and practice true to the most radical implications of our positions'.

Inebriation is international

Gillian Kent, Cambridge

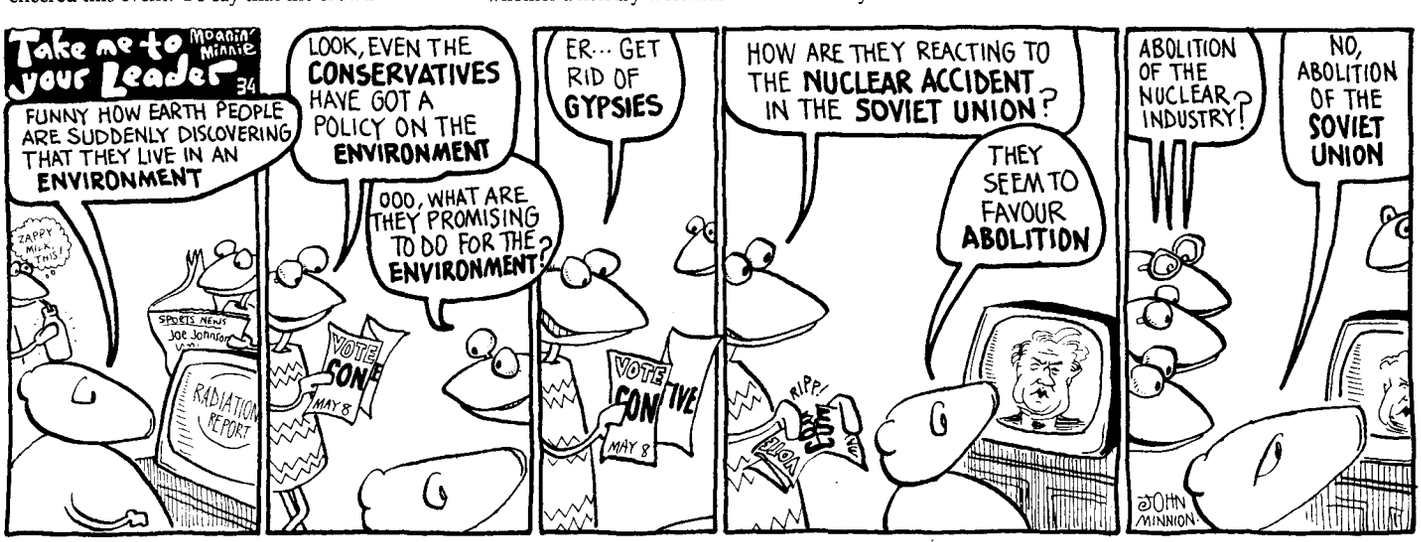
I was appalled to read Anne Smith's Diary (*NS* 18 April). It was particularly ironic that an article on the facing page — 'Page Three put into place' criticising the *Sun* for '. . . failing to deal with serious, real-life events' — should appear alongside such stereo-typing, racist rubbish. Had Anne Smith rubbed shoulders in a train carriage with an inebriated West Indian rather than a Scot, would the *New Statesman* have treated us to similar observations? Racism is no less offensive whichever group it is applied to.

Military research in universities

Proposed research agreements for the Star Wars programme have focused attention on the issue of military research in the country. Over 50 per cent of government-funded Research and Development is spent by the military. At the same time, barely 2 per cent is given over to research in health and environmental matters. Money for Research and Development is not being used for the needs and future health of the nation.

The Ministry of Defence funds nearly £10 million worth of research in universities and colleges. This figure has risen from £3 million within a decade — and yet most students are completely unaware of this military intrusion onto campuses. It is suspected that Agent Orange, the deadly chemical weapon used in Vietnam, was developed in a British university. The American Department of Defense has sponsored research in a number of universities for many years.

A national campaign is being launched to uncover and publicise the amount of military research in every college in the country. It is aiming to have a campaigning group in each college, arguing against this type of military involvement on campus. If you are interested in joining or wish to have more information, please write (with large SAE) to: Campaign Against Military Research on Campus (CAMROC), 190B Burdett Road, Bow, London E3. Tel: 01-980 2455.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RIPP!
ABOLITION OF THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY!
NO, ABOLITION OF THE SOVIET UNION
JOHN MINNION

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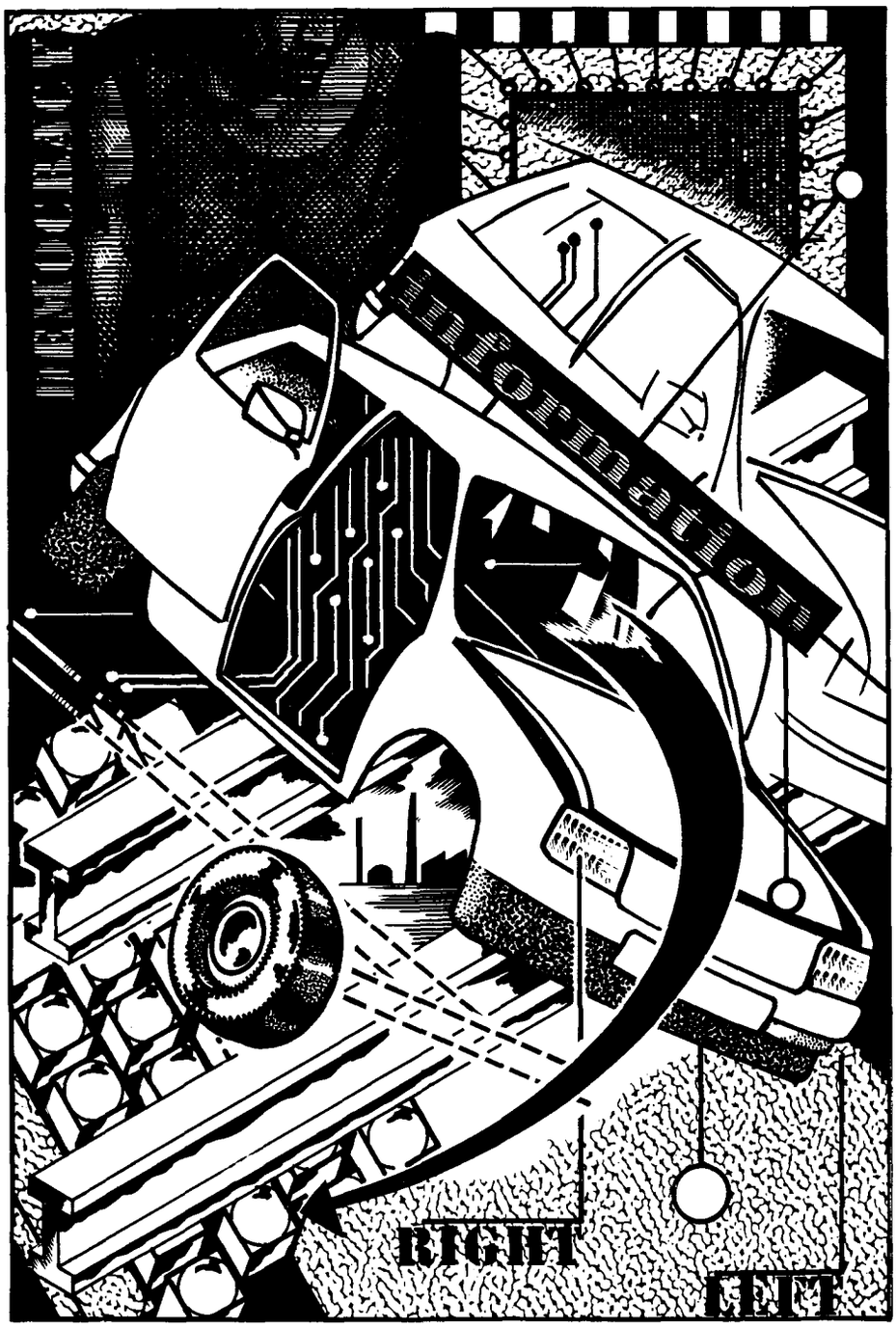

WILL HILL

BARRICADES FALL

Radiation clouds, capital, information technology — they know no boundaries. If the Left in Europe is to take the lead in shaping tomorrow's world its strategy must go beyond the limits of the nation state. Last Christmas, we published an article by Peter Glotz, Secretary General of the West German SPD on the European Left. Today we publish this response by ACHILLE OCCHETTO, of the Italian Communist Party, to Glotz's 'Manifesto of the European Left'

THE EUROPEAN labour movement, once sharply divided between the Second and Third International might now be seen as moving into a third phase. In terms of political geography this phase lies midway between social democracy and communism. More significantly, it is marked by the awareness that present events and tendencies make possible a completely new left-wing initiative. Old justifications for maintaining internal divisions within the Left have disappeared, and within the great social democracies of northern Europe the new mood is one of constructive self-criticism.

It is not hard to identify the reasons compelling the forces of the Left to return to the drawing-board. The crisis of 'national Keynesianism' and of the old reformist politics has been accelerated by the fact that the internationalisation of the economy means that the nation-state is less and less able to control economic development. Meanwhile the expansion of financial markets determines economic choices beyond the effective control of individual governments.

This crisis has been aggravated by the strong conservative backlash that has swept the Western world in recent years, forcing us to recognise that no coherent European Left exists as yet. We have stood by and watched ineffectually as an innovatory and no longer purely backward-looking New Right has taken its stand on the European state. It took us a long time to realise that the conservative offensive had established a new agenda for the debate between free marketeers and social reformers. Now faced with this reality our response at the international level must be to re-examine critically not only our programmes but the whole of our political culture.

The conservative counter-offensive undoubtedly derived some credibility from the chronically bureaucratic and 'statist' politics of the welfare state, due, no doubt, to an inherent incapacity to resolve the structural problems underlying old ideas of growth in the 'consumer society'. But the time has come for us to realise that all the changes generally cited as evidence of the obsolete nature of traditional socialism can equally be used to demonstrate the obsolete nature of traditional capitalism.

Severe social and structural problems are caused by the fact that higher levels of production no longer result in an expansion of the labour force, and that, consequently, overall employment cannot be increased. Will we be forced, simply in order to uphold the existing ownership system, to witness the emergence of a new social order,

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dominated by the social divide between those in work and those who are unemployed? Or must a way now be found of enabling everyone to work, albeit for fewer hours?

In as much as it actually 'eliminates' workers, technological unemployment challenges the fundamental importance capitalism attaches to the notion of ownership. As such it necessitates a radical restructuring of society. 'Ownership' has little meaning once it has lost the possibility of expressing itself through the organisation and employment of labour. Traditional notions of capitalism and statist socialism are simultaneously in crisis. It is very likely that the shape of a new society increasingly dominated by information technology will be *neither capitalist nor socialist as we* normally understand these terms.

The forces of reform can no longer avoid confronting the shifting nature of their strategy of social alliances as they respond to the pressure of a society moving rapidly towards the so-called 'information era'; for those alliances shift as we experience profound changes in the social structure which inevitably have an effect on the organisation of production. We need to look particularly at the question of those 'transversal alliances' that cut across traditional rigid social categories. We must recognise the central importance of political programmes as the key link in any alliance strategy.

THE FIRST OBJECTIVE of the European Left must be to destabilise the conservative bloc. This means resisting the emergence of the 'two-thirds society' in which — as Peter Glotz has said — the ruling groups would be quite willing to accept the social degradation of the weakest third of society, made up of the unemployed, manual and seasonal workers, the old, the disabled, the inadequate, or otherwise marginalised groups.

Glotz's concept of the two-thirds society accurately describes the conservative goal of mobilising workers with secure jobs against marginal workers. He is right to insist that the Left should try to build a coalition bringing the greatest possible number of the strong into union with the weak even when their interests are divergent. The crucial factor in this is the ability of the European labour movement to be an effective organising force among the 'new workers', i.e. those who no longer work in traditional industry but who are involved in the whole process of cultural and social reproduction and in the leisure industry.

Is the European Left prepared to work together and take the lead in the process of modernisation? This can only be achieved if it is prepared to abandon its traditional defensive and sectarian attitudes. Then and only then it could open a debate with a section of the 'strong', those, for instance, involved in the new technology, the new professional classes, and those forward-looking entrepreneurs who are willing to work towards employment and growth in the context of a new framework of industrial relations and democratic control of the economy.

We cannot hope to construct alliances such as these unless we move beyond national boundaries and aim at a European strategy. Although Europe has been in acute crisis since the 1970s, up to now the Left has been unable to put forward any kind of credible alternative programme. Today the situation is far more open-ended. In spite of its attempted populism the new conservative offensive appears to be on the decline, faced with its evident failure to resolve *major structural contradictions, notably the* vast problem of unemployment. These contradictions are threatening to swell the ranks of the excluded while power is left in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Nevertheless it would be foolish to underestimate the formidable determination of the enemy, whose main strength lies in its ability to exclude the majority from political power by controlling technological development and internationalising the decision-making process — as is apparent in the case of the so-called Star Wars project.

THE STRUGGLE against these new forms of erosion of the democratic process cannot be conducted solely from within the traditional nation-state. This is why we enthusiastically support the central proposition of Peter Glotz's *Manifesto of the European Left:* a courageous European strategy based firmly on a programme of socially advanced democracy and of expansion of the internal European market. This process must start in the EEC, expanding gradually to involve the rest of Western and Eastern Europe in a framework of common policies, institutions and debates.

The most promising result of this process of realignment would be for eurocentric attitudes to give way to the definition of a European role at the heart of the global conflicts of our epoch, East-West and North-South. Two developments point to this possibility: on the one hand the Italian communists have accepted that political democracy has a universal value and is an end in itself, and on the other social democrats have reconsidered the nature of the crisis of the welfare state and moved beyond a merely exploitative attitude to the Third World. These should be seen as a powerful indication of the feasibility of Left unity in Europe.

A new European Left would need to adopt an active and open-minded attitude to international relations, allowing a realistic evaluation of any positive developments in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union or China. At the same time it is vital that we should continue to criticise these models of society, not least from the point of view of freedom and democracy.

The structural changes which are taking place in capitalist societies, such as the reduction in the size of the industrial working class, can in no way diminish the need for socialism. Those changes do, however, impose a modern perspective on the way this need must be tackled. They call forth new social subjects transforming the technological revolution into a great historic opportunity. Nevertheless we must remember that not all the possibilities to emerge will necessarily be favourable to the progress of socialism. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that the new European Left should be actively engaged in a visible, *open and modern critique of capitalist* society. If in our time such a critique gained mass acceptance it would be a powerful political weapon, returning once again to haunt Europe, but no longer as a ghost or, even less, as an ideological model imposed from without. Rather it would be a response arising out of the real contradictions of capitalism and the actual changes taking place in society, as well as from a search for identity rooted in the social and cultural traditions of the European labour and democratic movement.

WHAT WE NOW NEED is a concept of socialisation that does not identify public intervention with state property. We need to work towards freeing the market from the stifling restraint of bureaucratic and 'dirigistic' controls, and redirecting it towards higher social objectives. In this sense I advocate a new liberalism able to take us beyond both statism and the pure 'ideology' of the market.

This would also lead us to examine the *quality* of economic development, described by Marx as the fulfilling of human needs. Part of the concept of human need must be the crucial question of the way in which people relate to each other at the moment of production. In fact the aim of the economy, even a full-employment economy, should be the overcoming of the separation between direct producers and their products. This must involve looking at how production decisions are made and by whom and what is to be produced and why. In other words we have to examine the question of democracy *within the enterprise.*

To tackle these general issues the labour movement and the whole of the European Left must not fear to examine seriously all the novel developments which have occurred in the last 15 years and all the difficulties which are before us. It must not hesitate to advance its own strategy of development, a strategy which, while meeting vital social and economic needs of the system, is also in tune with the fundamental aspirations of our movement. □

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How to win friends

Mark Hollingsworth

Strikes and the Media
NICHOLAS JONES *Blackwell* £14.95
Political Strikes
PETER HAIN *Viking* £14.95

ONE OF THIS government's most notable achievements has been its powerful influence over most of the media. So much so that, when leading Conservatives argued last autumn that the decline in Tory popularity was due to problems of presentation rather than their policies, many of their own supporters were incredulous. Sir Ian Gilmour said:

> To put the blame for present ills [in the Conservative party] on failure of presentation is bizarre. The broadcasting services are cowed, if still independent, and large sections of the press are obsequiously anxious to print Downing Street's bidding. No government has been given an easier ride by the media.

Indeed. But the 'easy ride' could not have been secured without a covert news management operation from Downing Street and Tory Central Office. And it's now clear that employers in nationalised industries are equally keen to adopt such tactics during major strikes. As new work practices and cutbacks in industrial capacity have replaced pay as the main cause of disputes since 1979, management has recognised the need to communicate directly with their workers. So consultants have been hired to introduce new ploys to bypass the unions. Hence the use of personal letters to employees, newspaper advertising, videos and secret collusion with sympathetic Fleet Street editors.

Nicholas Jones, BBC radio news's labour correspondent, has witnessed such techniques at first hand and has examined how they were utilised by ministers and management in recent disputes at British Leyland, British Steel, British Rail and the National Coal Board. **Strikes and the Media** is a fascinating and perceptive account of the resulting propaganda war. Most of the book deals with the miners' strike, particularly the attempts by the NCB and government to manipulate broadcast news. But the most valuable section is Jones's analysis of Energy Secretary Peter Walker's carefully planned news management operation with friendly Fleet Street editors. Walker didn't trust the industrial correspondents, so he went over their heads:

> Specialist correspondents were often exasperated to find that their editors had been given a fuller briefing by Mr Walker than they themselves had been able to obtain in a whole day's work. However hard a reporter might try to produce a balanced report, his efforts could easily be sidestepped. Stories that gave prominence to the position of the NUM could simply be omitted from the newspaper, shortened or submerged into another report.

Jones is firmly on the side of his fellow industrial correspondents. And quite right too. By and large, the bias, omissions and distortions in Fleet Street's coverage of the miners' strike didn't come from the industrial journalists. They came from the editors and executives who were more interested in pleasing certain Cabinet ministers than in independent reporting.

Another major theme of Jones's book is what he calls the 'NUM's failure to adopt an overall strategy for communications and publicity' and he argues that this 'should serve as a warning to the trade union and labour movement'. He cites the lack of press conferences to promote NUM policies, the inaccessibility of union leaders and Arthur Scargill's apparent refusal to delegate responsibility. Nell Myers, the union's press officer, strongly refutes these criticisms. She argues that the real problem was the unwillingness of most newspapers, TV and radio to report certain issues, particularly the economic case for coal, for political reasons.

Peter Walker: energetic news management operator

City Syndication

The flaw in Jones's analysis is that he tends not to differentiate between the broadcasting and print media. No doubt a more efficient and co-ordinated media strategy would improve TV and radio coverage,but Fleet Street is a wholly different matter. The issue — with the possible exception of the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times* and the *Observer* — is political; it's about proprietors, power and ownership, and no amount of Madison Avenue PR hype will solve that situation.

However, Jones's basic contention that trade unions need to employ more open, direct campaigning methods is surely correct. It is also a theme that runs through **Political Strikes**, an excellent new book by Peter Hain, vice-chair of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. He argues that the unions should act rather than merely react and broaden their presently industrial horizons to take in the political arena.

Hain produces convincing evidence that successive governments have steadily increased the power of the state to help employers break strikes. This has been done through greater police powers, tighter contingency planning and reductions in social security payments for strikers' families. There is a particularly revealing chapter on the law and the unions, in which Hain shows that the notion of a politically biased judiciary has considerable substance.

Faced with such demonstrations of power, the unions, Hain argues, need to win public opinion as well as their own members if they are to survive. This means political campaigns about the wider aspects of their industries. Hain's solution is a 'new unionism':

> Workers must look to the future, building upon existing collective bargaining procedures, to tackle a wide range of company decisions guarded under the umbrella of 'right to manage'. Full disclosure of information, investment priorities, production plans, research, marketing, profit distribution, future planning — all these are potentially more important than waiting to see what is left to pick up during annual wage negotiations.

The need for trade unions to change gear and campaign on more extensive political issues is also argued by Ken Coates and Tony Topham in *Trade Unions and Politics* (Blackwell, £25 & £7.95). They quote the 1984 West German metal-workers' strike for a shorter working week as a precedent and conclude that 'it was an important breakthrough because it was orientated outwards at winning public opinion as a major strategic objective'. □

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FICTION

Tough guys

Liz Heron

Thin Wealth
ROBERT ALAN JAMIESON *Polygon* £9.95
The Flood
IAN RANKIN *Polygon* £9.95
The Comeback
ALEX CATHCART *Polygon* £9.95
Lonely The Man Without Heroes
M. S. POWER *Heinemann* £9.95
Ice and Fire
ANDREA DWORKIN *Secker* £9.50

DISPLACEMENT through emigration or other severing changes, the long reach of family ties, the dereliction or industrial wastage of familiar landscapes are themes present in all three of the novels fom Polygon. In different ways, each of these new writers (two of them first novelists) deals with the dislocations of Scottish working-class experience since the Sixties and, by implication, through longer histories.

Robert Alan Jamieson's second novel **Thin Wealth** is a documentary fiction charting the oil boom and its decline in Shetland. Through a cluster of village characters and their family groupings he sets out to construct a picture of what the oil and its doubtful benefits have meant to lives and community, and at the same time to tell individual stories that exist beyond and outside this immediate context. But each of these two levels is sacrificed to the other and the result is somewhat cluttered, at worst reading like a Shetland soap opera or a schematic piece of reportage. This is a pity, for there is also proof that Robert Alan Jamieson has a feel for the kind of measured and vivid detail that with greater narrative economy would have made this a memorable novel.

In **The Flood** Ian Rankin screens fairy-tale ambiguities around perceptions of good and evil, guilt and innocence, creating an atmosphere of unease and suspicion that is refracted through folk memories of witchcraft and its local punishments. The location is a Fife mining village that over two decades has slithered from the relative security of full employment to pit closures and decline. Residual superstitions lend themselves to social scapegoating, to which the female characters are inevitably the most susceptible: Mary Miller, a young unmarried mother surrounded by rumours of incest who has fought since childhood against her outcast status, and the mysterious gypsy girl whose sensuality has provoked a first sexual passion in Mary's adolescent son.

The ending, a convergence of gathering omens and overdue reckonings, suggests that past horrors may some day be revealed to contain the seeds of redemption. Yet there's too strong a touch of Calvinism in this book's fantasy for the optimism to appear warranted.

Escape from the past is what gives **The Comeback** its geographical momentum, when hero Hamish Creese leaves the South Side of Glasgow for the spaciousness of Australia. Alex Cathcart's novel is another example of what William McIlvanney's *Laidlaw* books have already demonstrated: that the masculine culture and proletarian environment of urban Scotland breed tough guy heroes and settings closer to those of American genre fiction than anything else.

After the appalling physical viciousness of its opening chapter *The Comeback* emerges as a classic revenge tale, in which the victim is pursued by the obsessive memory of his own humiliations. Uprooted, drifting and tormented by a past he can only vindicate by refusing the future, Hamish returns, having meanwhile built much muscle and a somewhat cynical political consciousness, only to find an altered Glasgow and an old enemy over whom change has also ruled out the possibility of triumph. Of the Polygon trio this novel succeeds best, perhaps by virtue of its genre attachments, but also as a more focused piece of storytelling.

M. S. Power uses the dynamics of the thriller genre for his reflective exploration of political violence in the North of Ireland, **Lonely The Man Without Heroes**. There's plenty of action and suspense but bloodshed is less to the foreground than are its external motivations and the effects on the moral psychology of those involved. Far from being the enactment of the 'senseless terrorism' so gliby attributed on this side of the Irish Sea, the war is depicted as a conflict played out by reluctant antagonists with a closely observed set of rules. These are broken only by the British army,

Captain Stacey

Holly Beeson

Captain Stacey squeezes my bum. He invites me to view his paintings.
His coarse hands open the door of his Cornish cottage,
It is quiet and warm inside, away from the boisterous wind.

The captain seats himself by the portrait of a dead admiral.
Just as I am about to say something, he engages in anecdotes
about drinking tea with exotic eastern women.

From a cupboard he pulls out life size canvases of bare-chested
ladies with orange-tinted skin. I feel naked with embarrassment
as he plunges into the tragedies of his life.

A loud knock on the door brings him to a halt.
He isn't expecting visitors! He plays with his snowy-white whiskers
before opening. A priest, whose clothes have been soaked by the storm
steps inside. He spreads out his black raincoat
then turns towards me with an idiotic smile.

NUCLEAR DISASTER IN RUSSIA

and in western power stations as well, was predicted by Robert Jungk in *The Nuclear State* (£4.95), the best book available about the nuclear power industry, its structure, duplicity, and threat, not only to our lives and health,but to our civil liberties as well. Jungk examines nuclear power in every country and predicts that it will become the biggest terrorist target.

Recent literature published: New editions of *Triptych* (£4.95) and *The Flanders Road* (£5.95) by Nobel Prize winner Claude Simon, masterpieces of modern fiction. Paperback editions of Samuel Beckett's *Collected Poems* (£4.95), *Collected Shorter Prose* (£5.95) and *Disjecta* (£5.95) (essays and miscellanea).

A TOP TORY SPYING FOR RUSSIA

is the theme of *The Baring Fault*, a spy thriller by John Stonehouse, ex-MP and cabinet minister. Born in 1898, Baring goes through the first world war, the British invasion of Russia and decides to join the bolsheviks. Against an exciting background of real history, Stonehouse constructs a novel to make you wonder. (£14.95)

More recent literature: *Fictions*, the best writing of J. G. Borges (£3.95); 2 novels from Marguerite Duras, *The Sailor from Gibraltar* (£5.95) & *The Little Horses of Tarquinia* (£4.95), two up-market sensitive love stories; *Green Henry* (£9.95), which Nietzsche considered the greatest 19th century novel, the masterpiece of Gottfried Keller. And the *Nouveau Roman Reader*, an anthology with clarification of 8 important modern French writers (£6.95).

JOHN CALDER * 18 Brewer Street * London W1R 4AS

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seen from within as an invading force and, with rare honourable exceptions, as the tool of the real, off-scene villains: the politicians who have a vested interest in prolonging the violence and its attendant national dependence. An RUC inspector and an IRA godfather form an alliance to outwit a newly arrived covert dirty tricks squad and the ensuing drama with its subdued comedy casts a sober and humane light on the war on Britain's doorstep.

Violence is never far away in Andrea Dworkin's **Ice and Fire**, including rape, torture and assorted sexual humiliations. These may at first seem unlikely authorial scenarios for a renowned anti-pornography and pro-censorship campaigner, but a certain consistency of vision becomes discernible in the laceratingly repetitive imagery of degradation and the relentless assertion of woman as victim. The fact that the character behind the book's first-person narration is often the victim of her own masochism or stupidity in no way appears to indicate that men are absolved from responsibility for the damage. Possessing only an irrational self-consciousness driven by the search for sensation, she lacks any coherent sense of her actions.

In Andrea Dworkin's non-fiction writing the description of male oppression as an enclosed and totalising system produces a similar messianic view of women as beings denied the capacity to think and act for themselves, to the point where reasons only exist somewhere in the recesses of patriarchy's cultural fortifications and in early childhood. As in the novel, the logic is circular: entrapment and rape are everywhere and inescapable, unless men can be reduced to the state of sleeping children. □

FICTION

Slow boat

Gillian Wilce

An Insular Possession
TIMOTHY MO *Chatto* £9.95

> THE NATIVE NOVEL, by way of contrast, moves in a path which is altogether *circular*. It is made up of separate episodes . . . which may . . . be joined by the loosest of threads. It chooses to emphasise incident, character, and language. It usually contains long passages or extracts of poetry, fable, song, and essays, lists of goods, recipes, formulas for patent medicines, and even spells, which may or may not purport to be written by its personages and, to a Western eye, may appear altogether dispensable . . . .

Thus 'Pursuer' on Chinese fiction in the *Lin Tin Bulletin and River Bee* of Wednesday, January 30, 1839, somewhere around the middle of Timothy Mo's substantial new novel.

An Insular Possession is, according to this same essay, a Western novel in that it flows through time, from 1833 to 1841, from the squabbles of the Western trading companies battening on to the south coast of China with the Chinese authorities into the first Opium War and on to the lease and settlement of Hong Kong. But its progress is stately and its regard for incident-in-itself could well owe something to that 'native' tradition: a duel is just a duel, not changing anything, given more or less the same quality of attention as the Macao community's production of *The Rivals*; the text is almost evenly divided between narrative and extracts from diaries and letters, from the conservative, pro-British *Canton Monitor* and its rival *Lin Tin Bulletin* founded by young Americans Eastman and Chase, who deplore the British trade in 'drug'.

Eastman and Chase — with Irish painter Harry O'Rourke, Jesuit Father Ribeiro and other tangential figures — are as much the eyes and ears of the novel as its protagonists. It is as if the convention whereby 'our Western novel . . . addresses itself rather to the individual as hero or heroine, from the delineation and resolution of whose dilemmas, material and moral, most of its energy and interest springs' had been turned inside out. The focus is our group of friends, but the energy comes largely from the wider events influenced by public figures, Company bosses, naval commanders, Chinese Governors, whom we watch through their eyes. Gideon Chase, having — illegally — learnt Chinese, is taken to war as an interpreter and it's through his responses that we experience the sensations of bombardment, the sight of the defeated being bayonetted, even the bewilderment of British soldiers ordered first forward for their country, then back in the interests of conciliation.

A deceptively gentle book, it is nevertheless very demanding of its reader: it asks time, patience, carefulness. It may appear at first overly educational with its long passages on the coming of steam, essays on painting, recipes for the practice of heliogravure, fables told to personages and rumours of events in the UK and US. But once you slow to its pace, surrender to the leisured orotundity of its language, relish rather than skip the apparent digressions, then you may well find yourself closing it with regret, not only better informed, but sorry that your imaginative participation in another time, another place has come to an end with the parting of friends. □

MAGAZINES

That's the theory

David Berry

ONE OF THE MORE lasting contributions of the radical student movement in the late 1960s was the development of a new kind of

PATRICIA
HIGHSMITH'S
NEW NOVEL
FOUND IN THE STREET
'uncomfortable, frightening, compulsive and, worst of all, terribly believable. It's vintage Highsmith.'
Richard Raynor — *Time Out*
'an extremely clever novel . . . she is effortlessly superior to other writers of suspense stories . . . there is no one quite like her.'
Anita Brookner — *The Spectator*
£9.95
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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1960s was the development of a new kind of periodical, the radical journal. It is true that there had been one of two such journals before this time, most notably **New Left Review**, but the student demands for a curriculum more relevant to everyday life, a curriculum which made explicit the connections between theory and politics, encouraged a new generation of post-graduates to forsake the conventional academic journal path of career advancement and set up on their own. In virtually every subject a small collective formed with the dual purpose of developing left-wing ideas and acting as an oppositional base to attack the academy.

May of these journals, like **Ideology and Consciousness, Politics and Power** and the excellently-named but completely obscure **Theoretical Practice**, have gone the way of most left-wing magazines: they survived for a while and then petered out. But some are still with us and an irony of their project is that they have often turned out to be useful forums for young academics to make their mark and that many of the postgraduates involved are now in positions of academic power themselves and are defending the academy from a different kind of attack and trying to persuade the students of the 1980s that their studies have more relevance than simply as a meal-ticket to a merchant bank.

Radical Science has worn rather well. Its latest issue on 'computers as culture' (£4.50, from 26 Freegrove Road, London N7) includes extended essays on Artificial Intelligence, microcomputers in schools and the role of 'high-tech' in education and it strikes the right balance between making a radical contribution to scientific thought and explaining to non-scientists the political implications of the new computer age. Even better, there is also an annotated 'critical bibliography' on computers and a clear editorial which attempts to move beyond the academy and to speak to the non-cognoscenti.

There is an editorial too in the current issue of **Radical Philosophy** (£1.50, from 25b Shaftesbury Road, London N19) but it is much less successful. It introduces three essays on social theory which are 'central to different areas of debate on the left', namely the prospects of transition to socialism, an evaluation of Critical Theory and a comparison of Reich and Foucault but, like the essays themselves, the editorial makes little attempt to spell out in non-technical language why they are central and why non-philosophers should make the considerable effort needed to understand what they are saying.

Part of *Radical Philosophy*'s problem is that it has kept its original magazine format and its close print and rather sloppy lay-out give no help to the less devoted reader. But this allows the journal to retain its most appealing feature, 20 pages of short reviews, news and comment which are worth the money alone.

Capital and Class is still recognisable, too, but its design has considerably improved with illustrations and photographs and helpful summaries of the longer pieces. Its latest issue (£3.50, from 25 Horsell Road, London N5) contains essays on the local state, homeworking and information technology and is more 'economic' than I remember, although other recent issues have taken a wider perspective. I would have liked more shorter pieces like the excellent, if still a little overlong, analysis of the new Nissan development in the North East in a new section 'Behind the News'.

The best-designed journal is **Feminist Review** and it wins the prize too for being the most accessible to the unacademic, partly because its remit is broader and partly because it dates from a different political time, the late rather than the early 1970s. That said, its current issue (£3.95, from 11 Carleton Gardens, London N19 — these journals all seem to have been produced within the same square mile of North London) verges too much towards 'women's studies' for my liking, with articles on film, homeworking and the male artist, although there are four, more explicitly political contributions on 'feminism and racism'.

As with the others, the best way to get a sense of the purpose of *Feminist Review* is to subscribe and see ideas unfold over several issues. My general impression of all these journals is that they are worth subscribing to, that much of their original spirit still survives. This is one area of periodical publishing the Left does rather well.

No space this time for the new 'magazine of democratic psychiatry', *Asylum*, nor the newly-improved *Mens Anti-Sexist Newsletter*, *Gay Scotland* and *New Socialist*. To be reviewed. □

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BBC Radio Southern Africa Correspondent

Graham Leach's voice has become familiar to BBC radio audiences as he reports daily from South Africa. Writing from the front line he describes the events and people at first hand and explains the complexities behind today's headlines. He also gives a clear account of the historical background to this troubled land. *South Africa* looks at the chances for a hopeful outcome to the problems, if only because as the South African writer Alan Paton puts it 'One has to be optimistic, because to be pessimistic about South Africa does not bear thinking about.' 0-7102-0848-0, Plates and maps, £14.95

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4

Short stories and the New Statesman

A GOOD SHORT story is inherently shocking. The shocks don't always need to rattle our bones — as Kathy Acker's 'Male' (*NS* 25 April) apparently did for several readers — nor need they only be achieved in one way. A nudge can shift perceptions as much as thumping, while humour can be as effective as passion or analytical intelligence. But a fiction that doesn't startle us at *all* has certainly lost its integrity.

Integrity within journalism is distinct from that within fiction: to a large extent, the former depends on the writing's relationship to knowable reality. Fiction's integrity is more self-contained, deriving from the author's having maintained her or his vision of the world intact — having resisted the normalising cliché, pandering to popular prejudice, modifying her or his perspective to make it tally with norms of social exchange. An author who has done this will, of necessity, describe a world which, however familiar, is more or less askew from, more or less a shock to the reader's.

I don't accept *all* such fictive worlds, or believe that they ought to be promoted (most obviously worlds that justify sexist, racist or heterosexist abuses; less obviously those that are fatly smug and complacent) but a story that grows out of one person's vision, as distinct from some nervous, imitative, cynical or tired amalgamation of viewpoints, has the power to alter or expand our perceptions, to provide us with new myths, symbols and patterns, to illuminate our obscurer concerns, in ways that even the very best journalism can't.

A woman leaps onto a railway line to rescue somebody else's child. In the event, the child saves himself. The woman is sliced in two by the train.

Depending on where you read the reports, you'll get the tear-jerking drama of it all, a rant about safety precautions. But other items that might trouble your mind and will almost certainly *not* be pursued are the motives of the woman rescuer (altruism? exhibitionism? an instinct to nurture? self-destructiveness?) and whether there was a *reason*, beyond the purely physical ones, that she had so pointlessly to die. Even should a journalist hint at such questions, she or he would be unlikely to pursue them: journalism's language and conventions, the structures within which it operates, would make it a fatuous task.

But fiction's self-contained integrity allows its authors to create what priorities they choose — and to pursue them unhampered not only by facts but by pre-established 'news values', academic strictures, libel (unless they're extraordinarily careless) or the risk of damage to real people. At whim they can propose the most subtle and disturbing ambiguities; engage with already established mythologies, dream life, fantasies, sexual and otherwise; speculate wildly; contradict themselves; abandon linear reason altogether.

Selfish, certainly, and autocratic, this way of translating the world, but the rich box of tricks by which it can persuade us that we're actors rather than spectators of its truths can take us more efficiently than any non-fiction writing to new understandings of matters as diverse as feminist theory, class warfare, power — those things with which journalism also engages — as well as the ambiguity of courage, or the possible sense in a death.

Harriett Gilbert

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Shorter reviews

Tennessee Williams: An Intimate Memoir

DOTSON RADER *Grafton* £12.95

Writing in his *Memoirs* (1976) Tennessee Williams admitted that 'what is in these memoirs is mostly the barest periphery of that which is my intense life, for my intense life is my work.' During the agonisingly long eclipse of his career, as he worked for a comeback that never arrived, Williams gradually replaced his work with that periphery writ large; an offstage caricature of himself played for the public attention his drama no longer received. And since his plays were invariably *cris de coeur*, his absolute need for an outlet promoted Williams the paranoid celebrity, Poor Tenn the camping clown and outrageous ham. Using every ploy to win the sympathy of others, he himself often appears rather less than *simpatico*.

Dotson Rader's memoirs are an even more explicit extension of Williams's own; an even spicier catalogue of promiscuity, addiction, comic melodrama and tragic torment. Perhaps playing Trivial Pursuits with the sex and drug lives of Tennessee Williams would be more entertaining if Rader's reminiscences were hostile rather than merely 'intimate'; the bitchiness of a kind of Broadway Babylon might be interesting. As it is, Rader's book follows closely the pattern of the original *Memoirs*, imitating its rather disorganised shuttling memorial structure and assimilating portions of it wholesale.

In doing so it inevitably repeats Williams's original tactics; revelation is used not to confess but to camouflage the inner self. Donald Spoto, in his recent *Life of Tennessee Williams*, identified the *Memoirs* as doing just that, laying down a smokescreen: 'This is not beguiling humility, it was partly deliberate obfuscation and partly the incoherence of the 1970s.' This being so, what remains is purely a matter of taste — and Rader lapses at times with garish and undisguised delight.

But, since *An Intimate Memoir*'s real subject is generosity, Blanche DuBois' famous exit line demands, as ever, a display of kindness to strangers. So, I admit that it is a good read, with flashes of high farce and touching drama.

It honestly accounts for Williams's uninhibited self-dramatisations as the ubiquitous emotional doormat and for the self-destructiveness of his haunted, solitary existence. But, for the *playwright*, look to the plays.

Oliver Harris

Warfare, Diplomacy and Politics: Essays in Honour of A. J. P. Taylor

ed. CHRIS WRIGLEY *Hamish Hamilton* £15

For those of us who are not professional historians, there will always be a tendency to look for the broad picture and the general lesson in their work. And no one will be quite so infuriating as someone like A. J. P. Taylor who appears to deny the influence of profound forces in favour of the particular and the accidental. I write 'appears' because Paul Kennedy explains in this *Festschrift* that Taylor is far from rejecting all general or long-term causes, that at his best he enlightens us as do few others about the relationship of the particular decision or event to the underlying trends. And, as Michael Foot's Foreword reminds us, the role of accident, or at least of unintended consequences, is a point of supreme general importance in the context of war. Deterrence, Taylor has argued, has already caused one global conflict.

Not surprisingly, the distinguished contributors to this volume pay tribute in their own kind rather than by imitating the inimitable. A loose thematic unity embraces a wide range of subjects and approaches: from John Keegan's intriguing, semi-anthropological essay on 'Inventing Military Traditions' to Eric Hobsbawm's re-evaluation of the 'Moscow line' in international Communism from 1933-47.

Each of these, in his very different way, was a little too sympathetic to his subject for this reviewer's tastes. A little of Taylor's iconoclasm might have come in handy. While Hobsbawm may be right that socialism was not on the agenda in most European countries after 1945, it is still difficult to see those Communist parties which accepted this as the beneficiaries of Stalin's policies.

These papers show the importance of war to contemporary history, with the periods of war and aftermath as those in which central political changes took place. Here is an interesting point of convergence with sorts of social and economic history not usually associated with the work of Alan Taylor.

Martin Shaw

The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England

PAUL SLACK *Routledge* £22.50

Even after 300 years of intermittent plague, our ancestors never realised exactly what caused it. They understood that it was connected in some way with squalor and poverty but the connection with black rats and their fleas eluded them. Government policy, according to Paul Slack's well-documented study, was directed mainly towards maintaining public order.

Attempts to diagnose plague and keep it from spreading took precedence over treating those who already had it.

Plague did not unite society but rather drove wedges into the cracks that already existed. The poor were considered responsible for the plague, since they were most affected by it. 'One of the first charges on municipal finances during an epidemic was often a whipping post'; in 1625 you could be whipped or put in the stocks for leaving your quarantined house.

Paul Slack is interesting on the tensions and paradoxes of the plague in society. For example, the Puritans, who firmly believed in predestination, nevertheless were among the most energetic in applying plague regulations.

Demographic statistics combine with anecdotes culled from contemporary reports of the plague. The horror of the times is hard to imagine.

Church bells in Salisbury tolled for the dead so much that they had to be repaired after the plague of 1627. One man, knowing that no one in his family would be strong enough to carry his body when he died, lay down in his new grave while he was still able to walk.

Slack explains and untangles the very complex story of the reactions to the plague of the various classes of society and the development of a coherent policy for quarantine and prevention. Besides being an interesting study of the social effects of plague, it is a textbook of scholarly methods in history and demography.

Sarah Lawson

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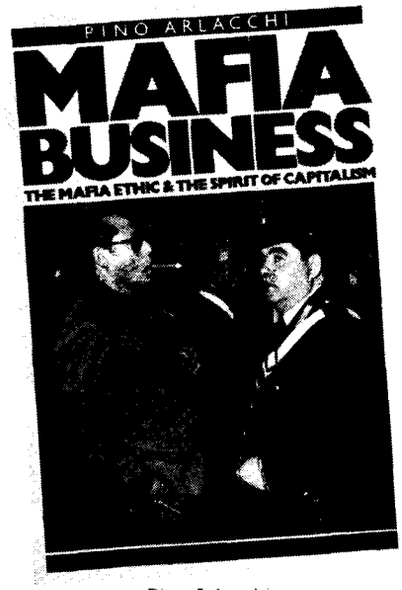

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PERFORMANCE

The need to get a move on

Kenneth Rea

Is this theatre, or the biggest yawn since speech day? Read on

PERFORMANCE WORK can no longer be ignored. Anyone remotely interested in the development of theatre has to come to terms with it, for this is proving to be the major experimental mode of theatre in the 1980s. It will probably become as influential as Dada, Surrealism, Futurism, Expressionism and happenings were on the theatre of their times.

In common with these movements, performance work rejects the traditional rules of narrative theatre and attempts to put on stage some of the trends in contemporary art and music. Minimalism, for instance, may be expressed by a group of people running on the spot for half an hour then quietly sitting down to smoke a cigarette.

When this happened during Jan Fabre's notorious four-and-a-half-hour **Power of Theatrical Madness** at the Royal Albert Hall recently, there was a mood of lighthearted hostility among the audience of 5,000. With nothing apparently happening on stage and boredom rapidly setting in, the spectators were provoked into an impeccably timed barrage of oral graffiti: the strangest audience participation I have ever witnessed.

'Why don't you lot down there stage an invasion?' came a voice from the gallery.

'Will you shut up, I'm trying to read!' answered a voice from the stalls. Laughter throughout the vast auditorium.

'What are you reading?' someone called out, several minutes later.

'It's a book — three syllables,' came the reply. More laughter.

What upsets many spectators of performance work is that they're unsure what they're looking for. It's like expecting to see a Rembrandt and being confronted with a Picasso. Often there is little more to it than a juxtaposition of unrelated images based on a simple theme, creating a particular mood. But is that dramatically satisfying? By drawing on design, music, choreography, text and performance, some of these images can be incredibly striking, while others may add up to nothing but arid obscurity. And because there is no intended single meaning, we are thrown back onto our subjective response, which makes it just that bit harder to say what is art and what rubbish.

The fascination of performance work is that it questions the whole basis of theatre and what an audience requires. Usually there are no characters, no narrative, no acting in the normal sense and therefore little emotional involvement with what is taking place on stage. To an audience brought up on Shaw and Shakespeare, this can be disconcerting.

Very Epigonenteater, very Sandersons

Incident, by the Belgian group Epigonenteater zlv is typical and a good starting point for anyone wanting to get to know the genre. Currently being toured by Chapter Arts of Cardiff, it is playing at London's Riverside Studios on 14, 16, 17 and 18 May.

If there is a theme in *Incident*, it might be to do with failures. If there is a predominant mood, it is certainly sexual. The 90-minute show begins with a woman reading out a lengthy dictionary definition of love while rubbing parts of her body and eventually taking off her clothes. There is in fact quite a lot of dressing and undressing in *Incident*, as there is in a lot of other performance work: I'm sure that the publicised nudity helped fill the Albert Hall for Jan Fabre's show. Epigonenteater, however, uses ironic humour to take the guilt out of our voyeurism. At one point, a man facing a naked woman across the stage strips down until he is wearing only a knee band. He hesitates for a moment, then keeping his eyes fixed on the woman he finally whips off the knee band — as if this made all the difference.

Love and the failure of love are made to seem absurd. A woman in a white, frothy wedding gown, loosely laced at the back to reveal her underwear, stumbles about the stage, repeatedly tripping up, getting up and falling over again until she looks a complete mess. A man and a woman analyse various ways of embracing each other and discover that by slightly mistiming their affectionate gestures they can end up enacting a violent combat.

As in *The Power of Theatrical Madness*, there is a 20-minute marathon, but this one is much more interesting because we are compelled to see the action in different ways according to the musical collage (by Simonne Moesen) that accompanies it. The four performers are running around the stage pursued by a huge boxing punch-bag that swings from the centre of a high girder. They push it on its way and duck to avoid being hit by it, creating an image of exhaustion and danger. Accompanied by a snatch of Mahler or Tchaikovsky, this bizarre race takes on a strangely romantic beauty. Seen against a background of jazz or a steam organ the effect becomes more humorous, while to cabaret music or a Stravinsky ballet it looks downright grotesque. Yet the action itself has always been the same.

Entertaining though it may be, the overall tone of *Incident* is curiously analytical. There is a sense of the performers, having newly discovered the medium of the stage, exploring its possibilities without being quite sure what to do with it. None of them, incidentally, claims to be an actor: they and their director, Jan Lauwers, all come from the plastic arts and music.

It is as if a sculptor suddenly threw down the chisel and concentrated instead on working directly with the subject. What we have here is a series of detached images about human behaviour. Watching these performers scamper frantically about their set — a large steel framework from which hang the punchbag, a swing and a trapeze — is like looking at laboratory mice being put through a series of whimsical experiments. The order of things seems arbitrary and, while we can be amused or intrigued by the spectacle, we may go away wondering if there was something about it that we missed. Certainly not rubbish, but neither is it great art.

Although performance work has been around for about ten years now, it still seems to be growing out of its artistic infancy, groping towards potentially exciting solutions and occasionally (as in Impact Theatre's **The Carrier Frequency**) striking deeply resonant images. When performance work recognises some of the aesthetics of drama and drama absorbs the experiments of performance, then a powerful theatrical style may emerge. For their own good, neither side can afford to ignore the other.

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THEATRE

Hard core

Benedict Nightingale

Ballroom
ROBERT PUGH *Stratford East*
Shirley
ANDREA DUNBAR *Theatre Upstairs*

WHEN ONE IS FEELING depressed about the British theatre, one need only compare it with the American to feel smugger and more self-congratulatory; and not only in the obvious departments, such as classical production, company performance and subsidy. Contrast Neil Simon's *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, Lyle Kessler's *Orphans*, or indeed the impending *Cage aux Folles* with the relatively minor pieces which opened at relatively peripheral playhouses here last week and you'll see what I mean. There's a rigour, a harshness, a toughness of heart more often to be found on our shores than on those facing us to the west. Bite there through the astringent-seeming coating and you're likely to find cherry cream; bite here, and your teeth may get bust.

Certainly, I emerged from **Ballroom** somewhat in need of a dentist. Indeed, my complaint against Robert Pugh is that he, or maybe his leading actress, has gratuitously added an iron filing or two to his play's already gritty core. The comedy of the first half tends, after all, to suggest that nothing too unpleasant can occur. One chuckles when good old Dick and his brother Ellis let it be thought they're watching porn at the local working men's club instead of doing what they are, slipping on the sly to Cardiff to waltz and foxtrot at the Mecca or Lyceum. One laughs when Dick's suspicious wife Mary sneaks herself into the back of their van and discovers their true destination. And I, for one, was vastly amused at the sight of her indignantly prowling the dance-floor with a hammer in her hand. It seemed the stuff of farce, but recycled by an author with a nice eye for quirk and quiddity.

Well, I was somewhat in error. I should have taken more account of the grim looks of the women, especially of Mary's aged mum who has an envious loathing of anything remotely definable as freedom or fun. Cardiff might as well be Babylon, given the feeling of fleshpots she injects into its very name, and even her 'Merry Christmas' has a graveyard ring about it. It's scarcely surprising that neither she nor her daughter should be prepared to see the men's escapades as harmless self-indulgence, the human equivalent of Beatrix Potter's squirrels closeting themselves in their tree and bingeing on nuts, still less as an understandable reaction to the principled glumness of everyday life in Pontyprith. Dick's sin is unforgiveable, something to be punished first by desertion and then, after reconciliation has technically taken place, by endless reminders of his fallen condition.

Insofar as the play is a comedy at all by the close, it's a remarkably bleak one. The principals are glowering at one another over the goodies at the rugger-club dance; even the subplot, which involves a bright young student nervously girding himself for marriage, is ending calamitously, with him losing his fiancée as well as the university place he's sacrificed for her; and, in the pit outside, the year-long miners' strike is about to erupt, worsening the already shaky economy of the area. There were times, as the play rolled towards this denouement, when I wondered if Pugh wasn't overplaying his pessimism, and others when I suspected that June Watson, that admirably unsentimental actress, was doing something similar with the part of May. Shouldn't she be emphasising what's betrayed, hurt and sympathetic in the character as well as what's betrayed, vindictive and unsympathetic? But, on second thoughts, no, probably not. That would, after all, dilute the play's intention, which is to lull us with a glimmer or two of human sunlight, then show us how very dark and oppressive those Welsh valleys can be.

Pugh seems to me an immensely promising dramatist and I suppose the same rather condescending tag is still to be applied to Andrea Dunbar. She's been around a few years now; but since she started being around when she was scarcely older than Mozart started composing symphonies, age and experience are no great disqualifiers. All the same, she's already achieved something that eludes many or even most playwrights in a working lifetime. She's steeped herself in a distinctive geographical, social and human area and made it unmistakably her own. One can confidently talk of Dunbar country, though country in the green-mead sense is hardly what it comprises. Those whey-faced Yorkshire lads and lasses of hers don't seem to wander far from the urban anthills in which they're to be found performing their customary tasks, which vary from outwitting the police to bringing up illegitimate children to wrangling with one another with all the verbal purple they can muster.

Shirley begins recognisably enough, with the teenage title-character secreting her regular boyfriend in the cupboard in faint hopes of preventing him being arrested and carted off to gaol. It continues equally characteristically, with her finding another bedmate during his absence and, by doing so, upping the temperature of her running row with her mother, who sleeps frustrated and jealous within listening distance. But there's nothing stale or mechanical either about that or about what transpires. Indeed, the scene in which the newly released boyfriend unknowingly shares a pint with his replacement, while everyone else watches and waits for the inevitable discoveries, is as tense and funny as any now in London; and the increasingly intricate battles between mother and daughter feel no less first-hand. Dunbar even manages to end on a moment of rapprochement — a shared cackle at the inadequacies of men — and still stay tough and true. She's the bard of the West Riding council-estate jungle, a talent well worth continuing to watch. □

Nights at the Keystone
DEXTER GORDON *Blue Note*
BABB 85112 (2 LPs)
Stand-up tenor players are like sheriffs in classic Western movies, lonely but masterful. Dexter Gordon typifies the breed, conscientiously doing what a tenor saxophonist has to do. This two-LP set, recorded during visits to San Francisco in 1978 and 1979, has Gordon backed up by a trio that includes the pianist George Cables, occasionally under-balanced yet soloing briskly and well. Apart from a single blues ('Antabus'), the performances are all of ballads. Gordon's swarthy tone is spread with broad brush-strokes across fast numbers but insinuates itself more snugly and cunningly in slow pieces — notably the 17-minute version of 'Easy Living', a superb and subtle transformation.

Too Hot for Words
TEDDY WILSON with BILLIE HOLIDAY *Hep* 1012
The agony that undeniably dwelt inside much of Billie Holiday's singing crept in near the start of the 1940s. Before that, joyfulness seemed to dominate. It does on these tracks, dating from the second half of 1935, all the work of pick-up groups assembled by Teddy Wilson. Soloists include Roy Eldridge, Benny Goodman and Johnny Hodges — in especially stunning form, as is Holiday in 'You Let Me Down'. Songs range from the worthy to the banal ('I'm painting the town red to hide a heart that's blue' goes one of them), but Billie Holiday's genius lay in converting trivia into something almost awesome. There are rare moments when even she seems not to have quite got the upper hand (these were, after all, practically her very first recordings). But listen to how the phrasing stretches across the beat in 'It's Too Hot For Words' — and marvel.

The Secret City
DAVIE DEFRIES *MMC* 009
Eclecticism has its perils but Dave Defries possesses a strong enough identity to make his cultural voyagings work for him. Which is perhaps surprising when it is realised that as well as playing trumpet, his normal instrument, he also takes off on Chinese cymbals, Nigerian cowbells, wind-gong, water percussion, Egyptian pipes, Kenyan goat bells, Burmese gong and West African thumb piano, often using over-dubbing to summon up several simultaneously. Aid comes from a handful of fellow British musicians, including the bassist Ernest Mothle and a fellow trumpeter, Harry Beckett. The notion of a World Music has always seemed as uninspiring as Esperanto, but LPs like this show it can be feasible as well as fascinating. **Charles Fox**

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ART

Could do better

John Spurling

Class of '86: Art
Royal Festival Hall, until 26 May
Nick Fredman and Ian Howard
Anne Berthoud Gallery, 10 Clifford Street, London W1 until 31 May
John Keane
Angela Flowers Gallery, 11 Tottenham Mews, London W1, until 31 May
A. R. Penck
Waddington's, 34 Cork Street, London W1, until 23 May

SEVEN OF THE London schools of art and design have recently been herded into a federation called The London Institute. **Class of '86** is a series of four exhibitions of work by the students of these schools and the first, which was opened last week by Frances Morrell, leader of ILEA, and the artist Patrick Caulfield, is devoted to art from the Camberwell, Central, Chelsea and St Martin's Schools of Art.

Morrell sounded a note of jaunty optimism, seeing the new Institute as an 'act of faith by ILEA in the importance of art and design to Britain's future'. Caulfield was more reserved, finishing with an impassioned plea for the importance of 'pursuing daydreams'. Clearly he fears that, in spite of being given the first exhibition, art is likely in the end to be treated as less of an educational asset to the thrusting graduates of the future than design.

The exhibition itself tends to support the case for the amalgamation of at least these four art schools, in that it is impossible for the outsider to distinguish the output of one school from another. Most of the work is, as one might expect, a still more confused reflection of the confusion prevalent among many professional artists. Vaguely anthropological or mythological subjects are popular and the styles are as heterogeneous and uncertain as the subjects. In this context an academic piece of sculpture like Ben Panting's 'Bronze Figure' looks stronger than anything else, simply because it knows what it's doing. And among the paintings, Colin Gale's near-abstract evocation of Fenchurch Street Station and Eleanor Engle's 'Still Life with Mango' stand out for the same clarity of purpose and consequent sureness of technique. There is certainly nothing in this show to suggest that it's a good idea to encourage students to pursue daydreams.

On the other hand, the work of three promising British painters in their early thirties, all of whom left art school some ten years ago, suggests what can be done with daydreams once they have been sufficiently explored, individualised and objectified. **Nick Fredman**, an alumnus of the Central and Hornsey Schools, paints 'dreamscapes, in the sense that we swim through our dreams'. Exotic fish hover among the broken remains of

Penck self-portrait waiting for true recognition

ships and other human debris on the sea-bottom, allowing Fredman a touch of nostalgic classicism in a figurehead, just as the slightly surrealist nature of his landscape makes it possible for him to use Impressionist light and colour without directly challenging the old masters. **Ian Howard** is a Scot, from the Edinburgh College of Art. His paintings are still-lifes in which heavy-looking geometrical and architectural motifs — cones, scrolls, pyramids — perform inscrutable, claustrophobic dramas on a shallow stage. The work of both artists is at least as much about the practice of painting as about fish, dreams or geometry.

John Keane was at Camberwell School of Art. 'The Emperor's New Pose', his cogent satire on some of the internationally successful bric-a-brac exhibited by the d'Offay Gallery, was shown at Air Gallery earlier this year and is included again here. Most of his paintings have more obviously violent subjects — city speculators, arms manufacturers, political negotiators, racial or ideological antagonists — but his best work is, like 'The Emperor's New Pose', ambivalent, half in love with the thing it hates. The series of five paintings on paper called 'Country Life' shows young, shirt-sleeved executives, their secretaries, office electronics, their cars and swimming pools, their thatched cottages and children playing ball in an idyllic setting of sweet grass green, with clumps of trees and windy blue skies on the horizon. Keane's feelings about all this apparent innocence are registered by the drunken, Soutine-like perspectives, the way the protagonists' features are smudged and the cars driven up smack into the thatched cottages and, above all, by the surging, twisting brushwork.

The German artist **A. R. Penck** is best known as a painter of stick figures which suggest the work of cave- or bush-men and have no doubt had a dire effect on art students with a weakness for anthropological subjects as well as becoming, even in his own hands, somewhat tedious by repetition. His latest stick figures, however, are made of bronze and are as lively, as delicately made and as mysterious as if they really were the ancient ritual objects they refer to. Their mystery consists in having no obvious significance of their own and yet for all that cockily awaiting, like true cultural objects, their inevitable transfer to the collections of museums and millionaires. And that is, of course, their ritual or cultural significance. Of all the art about art that has been made in the last few years, this must be the most subtle and subversive. □

FILMS

Cemetery road

John Coleman

Vagabonde (15)
Renoir, Russell Square; Minema
The Legend of Billie Jean (15)
Cannons, Piccadilly and Charing Cross Road
Clue (PG)
ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue

'J'AI L'IMPRESSION d'avoir le coeur sec,' confessed the 15-year-old girl to one of her lovers in Maurice Pialat's 1983 *To Our Loves.* This wayward, romantically restless yet emotionally chilly Suzanne was played by a newcomer of the same age, young Sandrine Bonnaire, and her performance — if that is the word for something so natural-seeming as to be documentary in feel — was at the absolute centre (or dry heart) of Pialat's extraordinary, enigmatic film.

Now a very different director, a woman with an erratic track-record that includes *Cléo de 5 à 7,* the American hippyish experiment *Lions Love* (where Warhol's Viva flourished) and the appalling, glossy-pretentious *One Sings, the Other Doesn't,* has used Bonnaire for her own purposes and damned if the girl doesn't walk away with the film again. In literal fact, her footloose itinerary *is* the occasion, which is Agnès Varda's **Vagabonde**.

Drop-out Mona (Bonnaire) shares the escapist impulses and *coeur sec* of Pialat's

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Suzanne but hers is a far sorrier case. Lest we should be in any doubt about that, our first sight of her is as a frozen corpse in a ditch. A voice-over indicates various testimonies will be given to camera from some who encountered her as she hitchhiked, unwashed, humping a tent in a haversack, around a wintry South of France.

Much of what follows was improvised, with Varda writing the next day's dialogue overnight and locals impressed into minor roles. Mona alive sports naked in the sea, watched at a distance by a couple of callow bikers, who admire lewdly but ride off. Then she rebuffs the advances of a lorry-driver: he dumps her and she makes a coarse arm at him. This driver later drinks with a pal, who tells him he had found her dossing in a bungalow he was about to demolish.

In this bitsy way, Mona's progress (or progression to that ditch-grave) is traced, gathering a little plot momentum from amid the randomness.

For a few days she shares a bed and dope with one David in a chateau, whose caretaker is uncle to an old woman's young housekeeper, Yolande. Yolande, with a brutish boyfriend who is to burgle the chateau with two buddies, romantically misinterprets Mona and David as sleeping, caring lovers, whereas the reality is that Mona splits rapidly after David's stash has run out and he had been bashed by the thieves. Away from the scene, '*Merde*!', she exclaims, disgustedly jettisoning a filched painting with a tear in it.

THROUGHOUT SHE blandly takes, apparently giving nothing in return, an idle slattern without a redeeming feature. An ex-hippy goat-farmer, with wife and kid, harbours her briefly, responding to a vague wish she expresses by allotting her a field to grow potatoes on; she lolls around in a trailer until his patience runs out: 'You're empty,' he says and, subsequently, to camera, 'not wandering but withering.'

Meanwhile, an agronomy prof (Macha Méril) becomes temporarily fascinated by her stinking, cadging passenger, learning she is not uneducated, was once a secretary; and Jean-Pierre, a one-time student of this agronomist, repelled yet fascinated by Mona, turns out to be the wife-ridden, arse-licking nephew of Lydie, the old woman Yolande looks after. In the one really merry sequence in the movie, Mona and Lydie get giggling drunk on brandy, when the aged aunt sounds off about grasping Jean-Pierre. He is to arrive and fire poor Yolande.

There has been a short-lived experience with a Tunisian working on a vineyard: there is now a rush to a close, with Mona falling among a gang of drug-happy vagrants at a railway station, escaping befuddled when their squat catches fire, straying woozily into an odd village festival during which she is doused with wine and mud by terrifyingly garbed locals, huddling in that icy ditch to die. At one level a case-history of a singularly aimless bid for a dubious freedom and — as such — grim, blank, depressing, the occasion is redeemed by being redemptive: character after character met on Mona's cemetery road is affected by her passage, however transient. She has created an unsettling, wistful envy, without giving a toss for anyone. And, once again, the potent Sandrine Bonnaire exerts her intransigent magic in making this tiresome traveller compelling, even touching, against the odds. Welcome to the refurbished Gate, Bloomsbury, re-designed and re-christened the Renoir.

The Legend of Billie Jean, scripted by the perishable pair who wrote last week's *The Jewel of the Nile* (BOO), directed by Matthew Robbins, who co-scripted the sprightly *Sugarland Express* (HOORAY), stars engaging Helen Slater as a blooming teenager from the wrong side of the tracks who flees with three others when her brother's Yamaha scooter is trashed by a bad lad and his would-be rapist dad is accidentally winged with his own gun.

With her battle-cry of 'Fair is fair' (she wants $608 for Yamaha repairs) and a Seberg-Joan of Arc haircut (someone has to explain to her who Joan was), Billie Jean (Slater) is soon an outlaw folk-hero. Ostensibly about youth exploitation, this cutesy Texan tale exploits youth to the plastic hilt.

Clue, based on the board-game Cluedo, kills Mr and Mrs Spectator, in the cinema, with a yawn. □

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

A Room with a View Palpable hit by uncommonly literate-visual Ivory-Merchant-Jhabvala trinity, exquisitely matching their meet to Forster's 1908 barbed, poised, pagan and wittily resonant shake-up of class-crossing Edwardian amour, via Florentine trip, for awakened young Lucy (Helena Bonham Carter, Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Daniel Day Lewis).

No Surrender Liverpudlian black stuff, seamed with horror and hilarity, as Alan Bleasdale's vivid OAPs, rival Protestants and Catholics, are misbooked into sleazy, crook-owned club with harassed new manager (Michael Angelis) for New Year's Eve celebrations and confrontations. Peter Smith directs (Bernard Hill, Joanne Whalley, Ray McAnally).

Clockwise Zany any-road movie début by prime farceur Michael Frayn, writing time-obsessed comprehensive head John Cleese into calamity-strewn race to Norwich conference, driven in dad's car — and out of and into his wits — by truant girl pupil, towards higher-lunacy finale. (Sharon Maiden, Alison Steadman).

A Chorus Line Richard Attenborough's valiantly rewarded and rewarding shot at screening the impossible: an audience-participation stage musical. Choreographically updated by Jeffrey Hornaday, it combines exuberent dance, a good song or three, with edgy dialogue. Showbiz loving itself, but for once so what? (Vicki Frederick, Audrey Landers).

Defence of the Realm Fumes of menace rise from David Drury's corrosive if erratic political chiller, written by Martin Stellman, reflecting current home-based concerns. Hoodwinked into disgracing awkward MP, tabloid reporter redemptively opens can of worms as Special Branch hovers (Gabriel Byrne, Denholm Elliott, Greta Scacchi).

TELEVISION

Gone to pot

Hugo Williams

ONE OF THE channels, possibly more than one, has been turning a shade of green recently that seems to work directly on the motor-reflexes of my button-finger. No sooner has green baize, red ball, prematurely-middle-aged-man-with-big-bottom-looking-along-billiard-cue registered on my channel-selection software, than I am off elsewhere.

This is great. It usually takes at least four seconds to analyse the four channels for entertainment value. Now this rash of green has eliminated at a stroke one quarter of the media's boredom potential, which has been climbing steeply of late. Only three more to go and we'll be cut loose, virgin and wide-eyed, into the unfamiliar world of our own evenings. May I suggest a swimming channel (turquoise), an ice-hockey station (ice) and a station devoted entirely to the House of Commons (mahogany) as the quickest way of achieving this?

Last Thursday the BBC made a brave start on its self-banishment programme with the tautologous **World Snooker** (BBC2) which spread itself nobly from 7.20 p.m. through to 11.00, when it whimsically swapped channels for the night and became **World Snooker** (BBC1). However, this summary ignores the hour-long early afternoon programme **World Snooker** (BBC1) and the later late-afternoon-and-early-evening show **World Snooker** (BBC2), which took us from 2 through to 6. May we hope for the same kind of sacrifice next Thursday?

Somewhere among all this world snooker, if you could find it, lay a new non-snooker series called **King of the Ghetto** (BBC2) starring Tim Roth and Ian Dury, although Dury does at least own a poolroom, if that's any good. A sociological thriller set in the Bengali community around London's Brick Lane, the series has started well, which is rare for the genre. Tim Roth, that violent chap from *The Hit*, is returning to the East End after a spell inside. With his prison crop he is mistaken for a skinhead and chased by a gang of Asian youths through the low-built, boarded-up streets we are going to be seeing a lot of. A man on foot would seem to have the advantage over a car in a crowded market but Roth keeps running and is duly beaten senseless.

The word is out that 'Matthew's back!'. Finding his girlfriend shacked up with a Bengali, he calmly makes his excuses (funny chap, you think) and breaks into a boarded up house for the night. This would not have been a good moment to blink, because we are now given an 18-month flashback, (a device so unfashionable it requires a subtitle) which finds Roth's face unscarred and his clothes clean. He is a Robin Hood character who has descended on a derelict part of town and organised squatting for the grateful homeless Asians. (One might ask why, but one tries not

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to.) In the first part we meet the opposition, the villainous exploitative Labour candidate Hussein (Zia Mohyeddin) and his ratlike sidekick Sammy (Ian Dury). A fairly complicated plot having established itself without being a bore about it, I don't see how the series can fail.

In a comparable series, the vaguely sociological **Prospects** (C4), set in the Isle of Dogs Enterprise Zone, friends Pincy (white) and Billy (black) have been framed and sent to prison, where they carry straight on with their usual enterprising activities, this time making hooch out of potato peel from the prison pigsty.

Pincy charges three cigs for a shot of pigsty, but he is too hasty. Everyone comes down with yeast poisoning, so they're after him for their cigs back. He takes refuge in a social-relations class where he is asked to take part in an improvised chat-up at the disco. The cons face one another. 'Alright?' 'Yeh.' (pause) 'You all right?' 'Yeh.' 'Don't suppose there's any chance of a bunk-up?' 'Oh come *on*,' says the pretty teacher, 'you don't really think that works do you . . .?' 'It does sometimes, Miss,' says the con apologetically, while his date nods unobtrusively, as if from long experience. A moment of truth, I thought.

The new **Robin of Sherwood** series (ITV), 'created by Richard Carpenter' out of solid oak I would guess, is best described by 'seeing page 14' of *TV Times*, where its star, blond teen-dream centrefold Jason Connery, offers his recipe for something he calls 'Sauce Connery': *Add wine to meat juices in pan and boil for two min. Add mushrooms and cook 2 min. Stir in rest of ingredients and heat through 2-3 min. Serve separately.*

After three sittings, I deduce that the sauce was very popular during the making of this series. I wonder if there's a French branch to Mr Connery's family.

Psychologist Nicholas Humphrey, a reasonable, soft-spoken explainer, has got the measure of television's limited attention span for his long-running dilation **The Inner Eye** (C4). He has discovered that what you need for a popular psychology series is some generally accepted fact of life, such as 'eating is good for you' or 'pain hurts', that can be rephrased indefinitely in scientific or metaphorical terms and illustrated by almost any piece of film that comes to hand. For his first lecture he returns to central Africa and tells how his observation of gorillas led him to a new theory about why they require the brain power that they have. To live in complex social groups they must have evolved to be 'psychologists'. Well, of course! Just like Humphrey here! On the other hand, perhaps they are just sensible chaps who don't need a lot of mumbo jumbo to explain why it is a good idea to live and let live?

Humphrey's theory is that man had to become self-conscious in order to cope with the complex situations he was getting himself into. Here is a sample of one of his weightier pronouncements, complete with clips of jets taking off, etc.: 'London Airport is a miracle of technological co-operation, but it is only our skill as technologists that makes it possible.' You see? Thought, *real* thought, is easy if you don't panic. □

Two views

Naseem Khan

ANYBODY WHO visited the Bookspace — the literature centre established in the Festival Hall near the end of its term — will be as baffled as I was by an exchange last week in the House of Lords. Lord Belstead, asked why it had been closed down, replied, 'The fact of the matter is that the area which was called "The Bookspace" totally blotted out the splendid view of the Thames and the London Skyline so nobody could see them at all. Now the South Bank Board have some rather better plans.'

Come off it, Lord Belstead — 'totally blotted out'? The Bookspace was a vast area, two storeys high, with a front wall all of glass. In it were a few bookshelves and exhibition panels. They'd have had to be five times as big to blot out the view. Truth of the matter is that the crowds that were drawn into the Bookspace got the added pleasure of a matchless river view, one of the best views in London. Which is why, presumably, the South Bank Board is rumoured to be turning it into a private restaurant for commercial sponsors.

●

AS WITH VIEWS, so with music. 'It's extraordinary,' mused Richard Peterson, one speaker at Manchester Poly's recent Song and History Workshop, 'that something so ephemeral as song can be captured and turned into millions of dollars. It's like taxing a bird for singing.' His session on 'Commercial Constraints on Creative Song Culture' was full of examples of the elements that effect that conversion process. The general assumption is, he said, that the channel between sender and receiver (or creator and consumer) is a neutral one: that talent will out and that audiences, knowing exactly what they want, will hare down to the market to buy it. This is in fact a simple bit of optimism that bears no relation to the real world of pop.

Take, for instance, the role of ASCAP, the copyright collection agency set up in the States early this century. Its effect was to cut out any whisper of country and western, jazz and black music in general from air waves and public consciousness. The arrival in 1940 of ASCAP's rival, BMI, with the previously cut-out music, led directly to the whole revolution of rock 'n' roll.

Constraints of law are only one of a series of filters that work busily between producer and consumer. The organisational structure of the industry (increasingly monolithic now, after the shake-ups of the Sixties) changes what is possible. Career structures within the industry perpetuate assumptions about type of music. Technological change creates different conditions and different music as well as different problems (like that of the musicians who can hardly perform live any longer without their studio paraphernalia). At another level they result in a counter grassroots movement, where live shows are pirated and sold locally.

The day's workshop had plenty of other examples of grassroots activity in song (though no live examples, more's the pity). A somewhat hybrid day, it had emerged from a conscious coupling of the sage world of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) with the new young International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM). The dichotomy of origin showed in the attendance (a large one — three times bigger than the organisers' expectations): folkies and academics and quasi-punks. It also showed in the singularly diverse sessions: on the one hand, 'The Murdered Sweetheart: Song and Social History', on the other, 'Song and the Miners' Strike'.

Inevitably there was a pot-luck quality. Not all the sessions fizzed to the same extent as Peterson's. 'Swell Songs in the Music Hall' had two academics expounding on the Champagne Charlie-type songs of the late 19th century. The popularity of the toff was, Peter Bailey argued, largely related to a general increase in upward mobility (and an upsurge of Lupin Pooters) at that time. The toff song was both parody and validation. His colleague, Jacky Bratton, detailed the host of female toffs, the male impersonators of the time (Vesta Tilley, Bessie Bonehill, Jenny Hill) and took the links back to pantomime. But though she recorded that the majority of these women's fans were other women, the significance of that was not explored.

Women, surprisingly, didn't do well out of 'Songs, History and Gender' either. Taken primarily by Elisa Mantin, with Vic Gammon on the sidelines, its argument was that 'song has been a privileged mode of expression for women', plus an unsubstantiated statement that women's contribution has been supressed. Quite likely, but where was the evidence? Mantin handed round a dauntingly wide range of songs, from female troubadours to Greenham Common (a rather silly song based on 'Bye Bye Blackbird'). But she sailed perilously close to a dictum made at the start of the day by blues expert Paul Oliver: the danger of the field, he cautioned, was a tendency to look for evidence that supported one's views rather than challenged them.

People can argue indefinitely about 'knowledge for knowledge's sake' and 'balance'. (Why, asked Oliver rhetorically, did the workshop cover Irish Nationalist songs and no Orange or apprentice boy songs?) But in fact the day's strength was the way in which it brought together theoreticians and practitioners, setting academic research beside more immediate, less polished concerns. It also demonstrated that the issue of Song and Music calls on a large number of articulate fields — oral history, folk movement, roots music and many, many more. The problem for any organiser is how to introduce a degree of coherence. It's a rich mixture, however. There is no doubt that this show will run and run. □

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Lagos lament

Ben Okri

THE LAST TIME but one I went home to Nigeria, the ruling political party had almost completed its devastation of our economy. That was three years ago. Since then there have been two military regimes.

Before I went back early this year, I had heard much about the previous regime's War Against Indiscipline. It was difficult to believe that the irrepressible Nigerian spirit had been tamed, but all the testimonies seemed to point to the fact that people were being made to stand in queues for buses and at banks and post offices, that garbage collection had been regularised and that petty traders had been driven from the roadsides. This had been achieved at the cost of soldiers having to whip people into orderliness. I went back in an apprehensive spirit.

I shall restrict myself to speaking of one day; for a day is long enough to read some of the signs of a place as old in one's consciousness as home.

At the airport I noticed that the queues were not as chaotic as they used to be. Outside my aunt was waiting for me: she had come to pick me up with her long-suffering Volkswagen. We spent 20 minutes trying to get it to start and in the end we had to push it the length of the road before the engine kicked into life. Lagos seemed as vibrant as ever, the roadsides were busy with vendors and street-traders, but something insidious had crept under its vitality. Houses were trapped in dust and seemed to be sinking into the ground. It was very bright and hot and everything was fixed in the dust-laden opposite of enchantment. In real terms things were sliding backwards: chaos has been winning over the city. One regime comes along and discontinues with the accomplishments of the last.

When we got to my aunt's place I got out of the car and saw a large rat disappearing into the rotting woodwork under the stairs. The rat could have been mistaken for a cat and its tail was as long as a whip. At the back of the house, and all around, there were many churches. The one at the back was having its evening service. The congregation prayed and sang over loudspeakers and involved the whole community in its communion. It was strange to hear the bells ringing and the fervent voices chanting over that unquiet area. Soon the other churches also began their services. The huge mosque across the rubbish heaps added its passionate calls of the muezzin.

It was imposible to relax and I was about to get some sleep, to dream myself back into the jangling rhythms of home, when, as is usual, visitors poured in without warning. They were mostly young, they had come to greet me on my arrival and they all had one thing in common: they were fed up with everything. They spoke of the difficulty of studying under what they saw as an unencouraging climate. They spoke of the high unemployment and the infernal prices of commodities. They spoke, maybe with some exaggeration, of people who had thrown themselves into the lagoon and left suicide notes blaming their deaths on the government. They all spoke of escape. One of them said to me: 'Everything in Nigeria has its original and its fake.'

He said this in relation to buying spare parts: he said when you go into the shops the first thing the attendant asks is: which do you want, original or fake? I began to suspect I had been smoking fake cigarettes. In Lagos rumour fills the place where information should be. After the visitors left, I managed to get some sleep. I dreamt about original rats, fake churches, fake governments, original chaos.

That evening I went out to see a friend. At the front of the house, I noticed fires around our area. I asked about it and people said it was just the rubbish that was being burnt. Plumes of thick grey smoke drifted up to the clouds. In the sky I saw a crescent moon, well-shaped like the most potent symbols. Below, I saw our area as a jumble of houses that could only have been thrown together from the collected nightmares of town planners.

Along the road commuters were like shadowy tormented figures of the apocalypse. Crowds wildly fought to embark on buses. Candles along the roadside illuminated the persistent traders. There was an orange-seller who slept on her oranges. There was a girl who sold boiled eggs and chanted her ware amidst the frightful din of juggernauts. I passed a traffic jam and saw a military policeman leaning on his sub-machine gun: its nozzle dug into the earth. All around him the great noise of the traffic roared like insane beasts. It's a wonder how people survive.

When I got to my friend's place there was a blackout and he wasn't in. Downstairs, the relation of my friend was in and he owned a generator. While waiting, I watched the interdenominational service for Remembrance Day on television. The ex-service men looked quite young and most of them wore dark glasses. The National Governor for Defence read out the day's sermon, the loudspeaker crackled and we could not hear one word of what he had been reading.

After 30 minutes the electricity was returned and not long after my friend came back. It was good to see him. We went to a club he had just discovered. We drank and talked about poetry while a Madonna video was shown on a huge screen. We got drunk on poetry and we went back out into the bewildering streets. It was late and the roads were clear. I caught a taxi home. The taxi driver wore dark glasses and drove as if all the devils from hell were after us. We passed two road blocks. At the third one a military policeman flashed his torch in our eyes. I paid my fare and walked the rest of the way. On a wall down my aunt's street there was a sign that read: DO NOT URINATE HERE. The wall was yellow with urine. The gutter stank of rotten eggs. The fires were still smouldering over the area and the crescent moon was gone. I went into the house and prepared for sleep and, in my sleep, all I saw were images of violence: indifferent officials, guns going around without anybody carrying them and a jostling nation of people who have tolerated too much for too long. □

Weekend competition

No 2923 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

We all know that 'Abandon hope . . .' is inscribed over the gates of hell. You are asked to supply mottoes suitable for engraving over the portals of contemporary institutions (the DHSS, say, or MOD or the Wag Club or . . .). Can be originals or apt quotations. By 22 May.

No 2920 **Set by Joyce Johnson**

New occupation-related afflictions.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

I wasn't exactly swinging from the Complex chandeliers before I was frogmarched by You Know Who into a judging circle piled from ceiling to floor with your entries. And now your frequent invocations of President's Finger, one man's disease which may well contaminate the whole world, have brought on a major attack of Morbid Fear of Annihilation (liable to affect all thinking citizens). Your inventiveness has left me feeling quite weak, not to mention full of aches, pains, itches and strange burning sensations. There's a lot of Logorrhoea about (Stanley J.'s version wins by virtue of his succinct description of symptoms) and several of you identified Militant Tendency as a sickness in its own right without need of any further explanation. Chronic Recurring Tightening of the Pursestrings means that I can offer only £2 per winning syndrome.

Levin's Logorrhoea: suppuration of the Biro.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Publishers' Piles: a chronic condition, leading to total blockage of all movements. Caused by wilful retention of waste (and other) materials and sluggish system.
D. A. PRINCE

Cricket Back: a progressive deformity found in cricketers returning from tropical regions, in which the subject is frequently bent double. Probably due to the habit of ducking to avoid good length deliveries, but may also be a gesture of submission.
NOEL PETTY

Chat-Show Host's Ego: a species of affective disorder, or functional schizophrenia, in which feelings of vanity, greed and hatred flourish beneath a 'normal', bland and boring exterior.
BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Minister's Nod: an involuntary nodding of the head which affects Cabinet Ministers, particularly older ones. This is also known as 'Thatcheritis' or 'The Collective Responsibility Syndrome' and it is produced by years of assenting to any statement or proposition put forward by the Prime Minister.
KATE SHORT

Prisoners' Ribs: breaking and/or severe bruising affecting persons in custody who beat themselves excessively against the toes of police boots.
JOHN STANLEY

Sellafield Glow: sufferers begin to glow after only a few days' work in this plant. Although annoying for the afflicted, his/her family save on heating and electricity bills. Interestingly, this disease shows an occupationally related effect: mere workers glow with a sickly green colour; however, managers affected give off a cheerful rosy hue. This is thought to be due to the latter's overly optimistic outlook.
KEVIN THOMPSON

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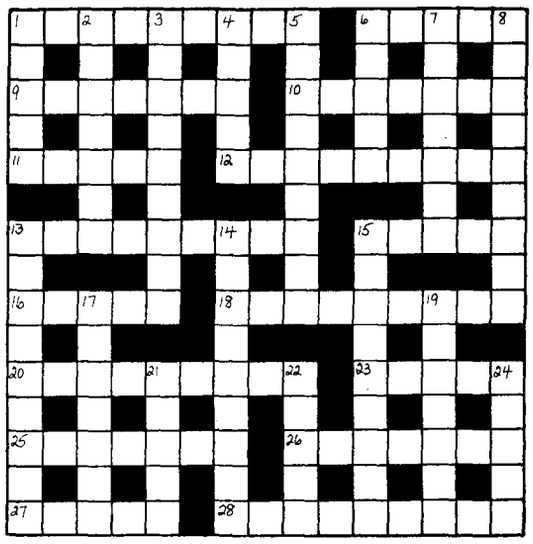
Weekend Crossword 1517

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1517, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 20 May.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

ACROSS

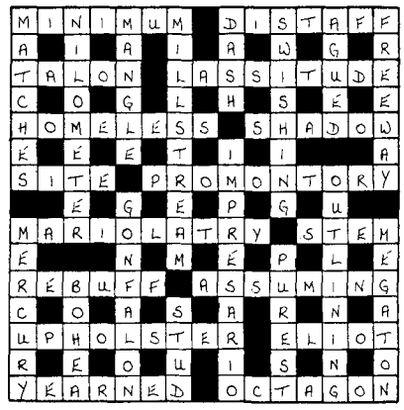
1. Top graduate not keeping his feet on the ground? (4,5)
6. The subject would have to choose if the king came afterwards (5)
9. Disease which makes the French tedious (7)
10. As a layer a dissolute woman is back in the money (7)
11. Think of love and waste away (5)
12. If a small creature departed, those remaining would be amateurs (9)
13. What to write on when school is back with examination questions (9)
15. Small name in sound of punishment (5)
16. Some metal found in something otherwise soft (5)
18. Means of making fast speed in dangerous places? (9)
20. Being impetuous, did some gardening without publicity (9)
23. Change one's time for work (5)
25. Take too much from a voter thrown into disarray by a vote (7)
26. Sea-food which would do for the sailor if there were no sole (7)
27. It is dangerous but the right one goes to heaven (5)
28. So grand if spoilt, so composure is needed (9)

DOWN

1. Room with nothing to provide a welcome (5)
2. Engage to depict a flower in the wrong paint (7)
3. Something from the garden for a fellow let down by a drug (9)
4. To produce a golden egg give up this coin (5)
5. Unit used for distributing cakes for the start of tea (4,5)
6. The human body looks like nothing when put beside mountains (5)
7. Caress a bird acting as a model (7)
8. King wraps a novelist in one of these garments (9)
13. Fellow-citizen who makes the hour begin badly (9)
14. Odd situations when an animal takes part in processions (9)
15. Fish with a stick for something plain (9)
17. Collects when heart-broken in school (7)
19. Gold coin changed and ring given for a flower (7)
21. Lobby for competitors (5)
22. Draw in temperature & rainfall figures (5)
24. It would be agonising if this tendency were within hearing (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1515



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COURSES

WEA WEEKEND SCHOOL on The National Garden Festival Stoke-on-Trent. Fri. 23 – Sun 25 May, including whole day at the Festival. Further details from: Wedgewood Memorial College, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9DG. Tel: 078139 2105. N19.7

WEA SUMMER SCHOOL. The 50th Anniversary of Spain's War Against Facism. Sat 9 August – Fri 15 August. Details from: Wedgewood Memorial College, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9DG. Tel: 078139 2105. N19.6

MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, *programme* of activities. Informal short talk & questions. 'Three Planes of Human Life' 8 p.m. 11 May. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2. N19.5

SEMINARS

German Historical Institute, London

Tuesday 13 May, 5 p.m.

Sir Geoffrey Elton (Cambridge)
The Tudor Parliament

17 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2LP
01-404 5486
Tea from 4.30 p.m.
Seminar starts 5 p.m.

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APPOINTMENTS

New Statesman

Applications are invited for the editorship of the **New Statesman**, which will become vacant when the present editor, Hugh Stephenson, leaves in the summer.

Those interested should write to:

The Company Secretary
New Statesman
14-16 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU

Applicants should provide a CV and may, if they wish, also send in a brief outline of their ideas for the magazine under their editorship. Those who are included on any shortlist for interview will be asked at a later stage to put in a fuller paper setting out their proposals.

Closing date for applications:
Friday, 23 May 1986

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AGENDA

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WED 14 MAY

FRENCH POLITICS TODAY: CRISIS OR CONTINUITY? by L. Saillard. French Institute, 17 Queensberry Place, SW7. (01-589 6211). 6.30pm. Admission Free.

JEWISH SOCIALIST GROUP and London Friends of Palestine, joint meeting with Leah Tzemel on 'Isreali Law and Palestinian Rights.' Friends International Centre, Byng Place, Torrington Place, WC1. 7.30pm for 8pm.

THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN IRAN. Westminster Meeting House, 52 St Martins Lane, WC2. 7.45pm. Speakers: Anne Sofer, Tasha Rejali, Keith Best MP. Organised by NAMIR, Movement of the Iranian Resistance in the UK. Admission Free.

VALUES IN BRITISH POLITICS. What they are and what they should be. A major lecture series at St James's Church Piccadilly, 1.05pm. This week: **Lindy Williams**, The Green Party.

FRI 16 MAY

CARDIFF. REALIGNMENT OF THE LEFT?. Public meeting. Speakers: David Blunkett, Martin Jacques (Editor, Marxism Today). 1pm. Room 2.1, Humanities Building, University College (off Colum Road). Org. U.C.C. Marxism Today discussion group.

SAT 17 MAY

FRANCO-BRITISH SYMPOSIUM PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND CREATIVITY organised by the Cultural Department of the French Embassy 17 May 1986, 9am to 6.30pm. Venue: French Institute, 17 Queensberry Place, London SW7. Information from and cheques payable to: Mme LEWIS-LOUBIGNAC, c/o French Embassy, 22 Wilton Crescent, London SW1. Tel 01-235 8080, ext 431. Closing date: 28 April. Fee: £10.

OPPOSE THE PUBLIC ORDER BILL The Hounslow Police Monitoring Group invite you to a meeting to organise a campaign against this dangerous threat to civil and social rights 2.30pm at: The Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1. Nearest tube St James's Park. For further information ring HPMG on 01-755 3237.

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SOWING THE SEEDS
JANIS GOODMAN
RUBY DOESN'T SEEM VERY KEEN ABOUT GOING ON THIS DEMO
WHERE'S THE POLITICAL COMMITMENT OF YESTERYEAR?
FAT LOT YOU KNOW.. ACTUALLY I'M PLANTING "U.S. OUT OF BRITAIN" IN MARIGOLDS, FORGET-ME-NOTS AND NASTURTIUMS
BUT ISN'T THAT RATHER AN INTROSPECTIVE FORM OF PROTEST?
DEPENDS ON THE STATE OF AMERICAN SPY SATELLITES

CHESS

I AM anxiously awaiting final news of the 1986 USSR championships, which were scheduled to finish last week. With a couple of rounds to go Tseshkovsky, by no means one of the favourites, was in the lead. Given the absence of the leading Russians in contention for the world title (Kasparov, Karpov, Sokolov and Yusupov), the results may not be so significant. Still, there were players of acknowledged international stature, such as Balashov and Beliavsky, competing. Beliavsky was stranded in the middle of the tournament table, but the most alarming thing about his position was the location he shared with the rest of the players. For the championships were played in Kiev, a mere radioactive breeze away from Chernobyl. That nobody has much of an idea of the date in the future by which the final news on the consequences of exposure to such emissions will really come is one of the nastiest aspects of the whole business.

The most notable absentees from the Soviet championships, the two Ks, have chosen interestingly different ways of limbering up for their important appointment in London on 28 July. Karpov continues with the regular programme of international tournament appearances that distinguished his reign from the aloof and secluded tenure of his predecessors. His very substantial holdings of foreign currency must make these forays all the more attractive. Kasparov has declared that he too will be an accessible champion, but he favours exhibition matches rather than tournaments. This may make for good publicity, but is it good practice? He has played just one six-game match so far, against Timman in December. The next opponent he has lined up is Tony Miles. Unless there is some last-minute hitch in the negotiations, next week in Basle Miles will become the first British player this century to contest a match against the reigning world champion.

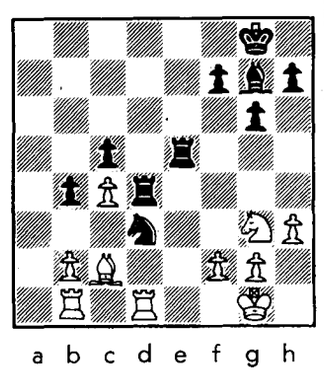
But of course it won't be a match for the world championship. Pride may suffice to make it a serious trial of strength. But the psychological atmosphere of an exhibition must inevitably lack the pressures that rack the players in a real match. Indeed, it is easy for the occasion to turn into a display of collaborative festivity. Consider, for example, this pretty little game:

1. c4 c5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nb4 6. Bc4 Nd3 + 7. Ke2 Nf4 + 8. Kf1 Ne6 Certainly a double-edged opening, though well known to theory. From here on White makes no secret of his aggressive intentions. **9. Ne5 g6 10. Qa4 + Nd7 11. d4 cxd4 12. Nb5 Bg7?** Admittedly 12 . . . N(either)c5 and 12 . . . Nxe5 lost more quickly. **13. Nxf7! Kxf7 14. Bxe6 + Kxe6 15. Qb3 + Kf6 16. Qf3 + Ke6 17. Qb3 Kf6 18. h4! h6** This fails to meet the threat, though 18 . . . Bf8 cannot be much better. **19. Bg5 + ! hxg5 20. hxg5 + Kxg5 21. Qg3 + Kf6 22. Qf4 + Ke6 23. Rxh8 Bxh8 24. Nc7 + Qxc7 25. Qxc7 Nb6** Although Black has 3 minor pieces for the queen he is too disorganised to put up serious resistance. **26. a4 Bd7 27. a5 Rc8 28. Qg3 Nc4 29. Qxg6 + Bf6 30. Qf5 + Kd6 31. Qd5 + Kc7 32. Qxc4 + Kb8 33. Qd5 1-0.**

Who was that bold attacker, and who the careless fellow who let his king get buffeted around in the middle of the board? It was **Miles v Hort** from a 1983 exhibition match — good fun, but you can hardly imagine anything less characteristic of their normal styles.

Problem

Black to play and win.



Solution

1 . . . Nxb2! 2. Rxd4 Or 2. Rxb2 Rxd1 + 3. Bxd1 Re1 + wins. **cxd4 3. Rxb2 Re1 + 4. Kh2** Or 4. Nf1 d3 5. Rb1 Rxf1 + ! 5. **d3 5. Rb1 dxc2 6. Rxe1 b3 0-1. From Gal-Hardicsay, Hungary 1977.**

George Botterill

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☐ A man smoking cannabis resin in a pipe made from hollowed out carrot ate the lot when a detective called, Keighley magistrates heard yesterday. — *Yorkshire Post* (Gerald Bickler)

☐ Pools winner Dale Gould is thanking the Royal touch for his half-share in a £222,000 dividend. Five days after he shook Princess Diana's hand at the opening of the Wyre Forest Glades leisure centre in Kidderminster, Dale, aged 27 and out of work, heard that he and his father had scooped a jackpot from Littlewoods. — *Malvern Source* (Mrs M. Nicholls)

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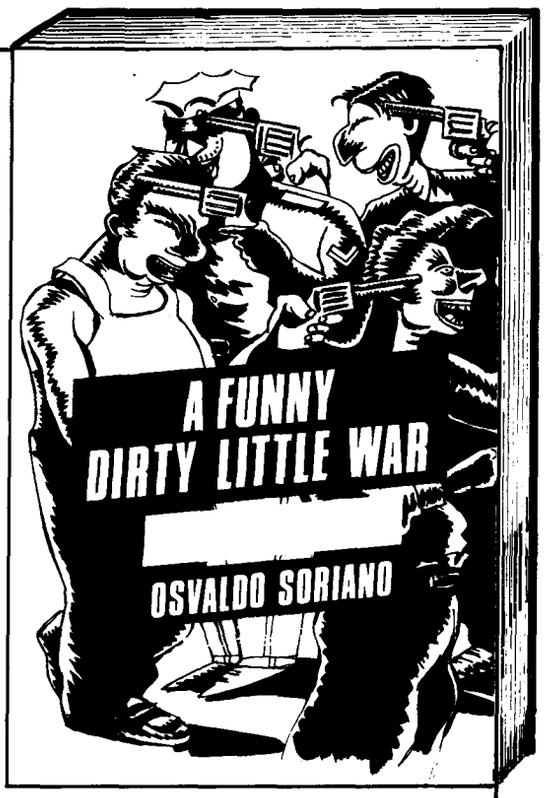

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